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Pioneer Spaniards
in
North America

BOOKS BY
WILLIAM HENRY JOHNSON

THE WORLD'S DISCOVERERS
PIONEER SPANIARDS IN NORTH
AMERICA



JOHN A. LAURENCE

Pioneer Spaniards in North America

By

William Henry Johnson

Author of "The World's Discoverers," etc.

With Numerous Illustrations

Boston
Little, Brown, and Company
1903



AMERIGO VESPUCCI

Pioneer Spaniards in North America

By

William Henry Johnson

Author of *Golden World*, *Discovery of the*

With Numerous Illustrations

Boston

Little, Brown, and Company

1882



JAMES O. KENNEDY

Pioneer Spaniards
in
North America

By

124682

William Henry Johnson

Author of "The World's Discoverers," etc.

With Numerous Illustrations

Boston
Little, Brown, and Company
1903

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PREFACE

IN offering to the public this series of historical sketches, it has seemed best to omit, in general, formal references to authorities.

Instead, there is appended a list of some of the books that the author has found useful, and that he can recommend. The following works may be mentioned as forming the basis of a large part of the text.

Mr. F. S. Dellenbaugh's "The North Americans of Yesterday" is an invaluable storehouse of information on the arts, customs, religion, and social life of the aboriginal Americans. Dr. Justin Winsor's "Narrative and Critical History" is too well known for its encyclopædic character to need commendation. Dr. John Fiske's "The Discovery of America" outlines the story of the Conquest of Mexico in that lamented author's inimitable manner, and is particularly valuable in pointing out the close parallelism between the

PREFACE

respective leagues of the Iroquois and the Aztecs. He also traces admirably the evolution of the name "America." Mr. George Parker Winship's brilliant monograph on "Coronado's Expedition," published in the fourteenth volume of the Reports of the Bureau of Ethnology, is a fine example of what thorough scholarship and patient research can accomplish with scanty materials in illumining a subject. With the aid of his translations from the original chronicles and his beautiful plates and maps we are able to follow the route of the Conquistadors with reasonable certainty; and we get a vivid picture of that romantic enterprise. The reader who wishes to know something of the stirring history of our Southwest will find it sketched with thrilling interest and with genuine sympathy by Mr. C. F. Lummis in his "Spanish Pioneers."

To speak of the Conquest of Mexico and omit a reference to Mr. Prescott's classic work would be unpardonable. Equally inexcusable would it be to commend it without a word of caution. One cannot ignore the fact that he wrote before the era of first-hand anthropological study, so distinctive of our time, and of which Mr. Lewis H. Morgan's article, "Montezuma's Dinner"

PREFACE

(*North American Review*, April, 1876), which the reader should by all means read, may be regarded as a striking example. However discriminatingly he sifted the accounts of Spanish chroniclers and noted glaring discrepancies or manifest exaggerations, the data were as yet wholly lacking for establishing an independent point of view. He did the best that was possible in the then existing state of knowledge, and produced a monumental work that remains an ornament of our literature. That it is pervaded with an atmosphere of romanticism quite unhistorical was an inevitable result of the limitations of the time.

For the study of the aboriginal races, Mr. E. J. Payne's "History of the New World called America" is an incomparable work. It opens up a dim antiquity, and throws a flood of light, drawn from numerous quarters, upon the peopling of this continent, the migratory movements of aboriginal tribes, their respective degrees of social development, and the progress they had made before the advent of Europeans. From this source the matter contained in the Appendix of this volume is almost wholly derived.

The author makes grateful acknowledgment to Mr. Frederick S. Dellenbaugh for his generosity

PREFACE

in giving the use of his admirably selected illustrations ; to Mr. W. C. Lane, Librarian of Harvard University, and Mr. Otto Fleischner, of the Boston Public Library, for valued courtesies ; and to the staff of the Boston Athenæum and that of the Cambridge Public Library for unvarying helpfulness.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS., July 12, 1903.

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Mr. George P. Winship's "The Expedition of Francisco Vasquez de Coronado" (in Fourteenth Report of the United States Bureau of Ethnology).

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Chapter I

ALONZO DE OJEDA'S VOYAGES AND DISCOVERIES

1

PIONEER SPANIARDS IN NORTH AMERICA

Chapter I

ALONZO DE OJEDA'S VOYAGES AND DISCOVERIES

Ojeda's Interesting but Unprofitable Voyage. — He leads an Expedition to Darien. — His Thrilling Adventures with a Pirate Crew. — A Terrible Tramp through Cuba. — Fate of the Pirates. — Ojeda's Death.

HOW much the world owes to its dreamers! Columbus, brooding over the old dream of Cathay, with its fabled splendors, steered westward over the Sea of Darkness, and hit upon a world. The same spirit animated his successors for several generations and led to the most important results. Fanciful tales had as much to do with inspiring the first great explorations as the stories of Marco Polo and Maundeville with inciting to the first discoveries. Instead of Cipango and the land of Ophir, the Grand Khan and Prester John, it was

PIONEER SPANIARDS

now the Fountain of Youth, Cibola, and El Dorado. Not one of the early seekers found what he sought or achieved what he hoped. Yet each accomplished something towards bringing the unknown world within the ken of civilized man.

It was a wonder-loving age. Nothing was too marvelous to be believed. Land and sea, lake and forest teemed



CHAMPLAIN'S MONSTER

with prodigies. Champlain describes from hearsay a monster, said to exist in Mexico, having the wings of a bat, the head of an eagle, and the tail of an alligator. Happily, he re-assures his hearers by adding that it is harmless, as indeed it is, for the creature so metamorphosed is none other than the inoffensive iguana, a huge lizard, much relished by the natives.

OJEDA'S VOYAGES

The men of that day had no power of reasoning from what they actually found to what they might reasonably expect to find. Invaders staggering through stifling swamps and squalid abodes of savages, expected to see suddenly rise before them the shining battlements of a royal city, with gilded roofs and gateways encrusted with gems.

This credulous, feverish spirit of the pioneers was the reason why, when the sixteenth century closed, more than a hundred years after America had been discovered, Europeans had made scarcely a lodgment in all the territory between Mexico and the North Pole. Of permanent settlements France had not succeeded in establishing a single one; England, not one; and Spain, with all her splendid opportunity, had only St. Augustine, Santa Fé, and a few missions on the Gila and Rio Grande. Why was this? Undoubtedly because the New World was looked upon rather as a wonder-land, a paradise of adventurers, than as a country that should furnish homes for industrious settlers. Men came to America, not to establish themselves, with their families, to till the soil, and to live by its produce, but to get rich quickly.

The achievements of Columbus brought into

PIONEER SPANIARDS

the field a host of adventurers eager to get a share of the treasures of the New World. After his third voyage, in 1498, in which he first reached the continent of America and discovered the mouth of the Orinoco, his description of the neighboring coast of Paria as abounding in gold and silver and pearls fired the imagination of many, and a number of expeditions thither were soon launched.

Quite a notable figure among these adventurers was Alonzo de Ojeda. While he was serving with Columbus in his second voyage and in the government of Hispaniola, he had distinguished himself by taking prisoner the fierce Indian chieftain Caonabo.¹ He was not with Columbus on his third voyage. But he no sooner heard of his discovery of the coast of Paria, than he determined to lead an expedition on his own account to the region that promised so rich a reward. King Ferdinand was quite willing that such explorations should be made by adventurers at their own expense, though his granting them leave was in violation of his express agreement with Columbus; and he readily issued a commission to Ojeda. The latter had no money, but

¹ See "The World's Discoverers," p. 66.

OJEDA'S VOYAGES ~

with his reputation for skill and daring, he had no trouble in finding rich merchants who were willing to advance the needed sum. With himself he associated Juan de la Cosa, who had been a chief pilot under Columbus, and was one of the most scientific navigators of his time. He was a veteran of the seas and a brave man. Another associate of Ojeda was the man whose name has become immortalized by being attached to the New World, Amerigo Vespucci.

The expedition sailed in May, 1499, reached the coast of South America, turned north, passed the mouth of the Orinoco, made its way through the dangerous strait between the island of Trinidad and the mainland which Columbus had called Boca del Drago (Dragon's Mouth), and coasted the shores of Paria, stopping at various places and noting the ways of the inhabitants, whom Vespucci describes very minutely. Then it touched at the island of Margarita (Pearl), since renowned for its pearl-fishery. At a point on the mainland the natives gained the friendship of the Spaniards by gifts of fish, venison, and cassava-bread, and then implored their assistance against the fierce warriors of a distant island, who, they said, were wont to come and carry off their people,

PIONEER SPANIARDS

to eat them at their leisure. This invitation exactly suited the adventurous nature of Ojeda. He at once took on board some guides, sailed seven days, and came to the island of the cannibals. The beach was covered with gaudily painted and befeathered warriors, ready to de-



CHAMPLAIN'S DRAWING OF PEARL FISHERY

fend their native soil. The ships anchored and sent several armed boats to the attack.

They were met with a cloud of arrows. But when they fired their pedreroes (boat-howitzers that discharged stones), the noise and smoke and deadly missiles caused a panic among the Caribs, and they fled. They rallied, however, in the woods and fought the pursuing Spaniards with desperate valor. The next day the fighting was resumed. The Caribs stood their ground bravely,

OJEDA'S VOYAGES

and, with their naked bodies and wooden weapons, engaged hand to hand the enemy sheathed in steel. Of course, they were slaughtered. Then the Spaniards plundered and burned their dwellings, returned to their ships with a number of prisoners, to be sold as slaves, and sailed away, having lost only one man killed and twenty-one wounded. This was very interesting, no doubt, but not exactly the kind of thing for which the merchants of Seville had put out their money. They expected a return in pearls, not in stories of delightful fighting, and thereafter they were not keen to invest in the fiery Ojeda's ventures.

The island of Curaçao, which the adventurers next visited, was inhabited, according to Vespucci's account, by a race of giants. But subsequent travelers found there people of ordinary size; and we may surmise that some beverage like that potent cordial for which the island is now famous caused him to see them double.

The next point of interest visited was an Indian village on the mainland, consisting of large houses, bell-shaped, reared on piles driven into the bottom of a shallow lagoon. Its appearance recalled, in a rude way, the beautiful city of Venice, reposing on its canals, and Ojeda gave it the

PIONEER SPANIARDS

name of Venezuela (Little Venice), which has since been extended to include all the neighboring country. The inhabitants at first received the Spaniards kindly, swarming around the ships, some in their canoes, others swimming, for they seemed to be, like frogs, as much at home in the water as on land. Suddenly, however, they began an attack. But Ojeda quickly manned his boats charged the fleet of canoes, sank several, and dispersed the rest, with the loss of many killed, while the Spaniards had only five men wounded.

Sailing further along the coast, the voyagers came to a region where the natives lavished hospitality on them, invited them into the interior, led them from town to town, and performed their national games and dances in their honor, in fact idolized their visitors, as beings of supposed supernatural origin. These delightful experiences, however, did not produce any treasure; and Ojeda determined to see what he could pick up elsewhere. He therefore sailed to Hispaniola. But Columbus was governor there and ordered the intruder off. The latter then visited other islands, carried off numbers of the natives, and reached Spain, after an absence of thirteen months, with his ships crowded with captives. These

OJEDA'S VOYAGES

were sold as slaves ; but the returns were so meagre that, after paying expenses, there were but five hundred ducats to be divided between fifty-five adventurers. About the same time another expedition, which had avoided fighting, returned to Spain with an enormously valuable treasure in pearls.

It will be remembered that Columbus in his last voyage explored a part of the coast of Central America called Veragua, which he found very rich in gold.¹ Indeed he fancied that King Solomon brought thence the gold which he used in building the temple at Jerusalem. King Ferdinand's greedy soul became filled with the idea of colonizing that rich coast and placing its government under a capable man. Columbus had now been dead three years. Bishop Fonseca put forward his favorite, the daring Ojeda, for the position. Another candidate was Diego de Nicuesa, an elegant and accomplished cavalier, who had plenty of money and could easily equip an expedition. Ferdinand decided to appoint both. Ojeda was to have the eastern half, including the coast of what is now called Colombia, and a part of the Isthmus. Nicuesa's was to be

¹ See "The World's Discoverers," page 83.

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the western territory, extending as far as Cape Gracias á Dios. Again the veteran pilot Juan de la Cosa became the partner of Ojeda and put all his money into the enterprise. As to Ojeda, he had none. Along with his reckless daring, he had a spendthrift disposition which would always have kept him poor. So these two sailed with a slender armament. Shortly afterwards Nicuesa put to sea with a splendid fleet, magnificently equipped.

The two governors were rivals, and when they reached San Domingo their jealousy broke out in violent disputes about their jurisdiction. Ojeda, in his fire-eating fashion, proposed to settle the matter by a duel. But this would have been too absurd, even for Spaniards of the sixteenth century, and his loyal friend, Juan de la Cosa, succeeded in calming him. Ojeda's dashing manners, however, attracted an ambitious lawyer, named Enciso, who had made money by his practice among the quarrelsome cavaliers in San Domingo. He agreed to fit out a vessel and join Ojeda, who, in return, promised to appoint him Chief Justice of his province.

Then Ojeda sailed away for his government, leaving Enciso to follow as soon as possible.

OJEDA'S VOYAGES

Some time after Ojeda's departure Nicuesa sailed with his splendid armament.

Now begins a series of adventures so abounding in strange vicissitudes, in deadly perils, in desperate straits, in cruel suffering, that this true story of the terrible sacrifices by which the Spaniards finally established themselves on the Isthmus of Panama reads more like lurid fiction than sober history.

Ojeda, true to his nature, as quickly as possible involved himself in fighting. When he reached the site of Cartagena, in what is now called Colombia, contrary to the advice of the veteran Cosa, who had been there before and knew the desperate valor of the natives and the deadliness of their poisoned arrows, he attacked a large body of them. After a sharp fight, he routed them. Recklessly following the fugitives miles into the interior, he came, at dusk, to a village from which the inhabitants had fled. The Spaniards dispersed themselves among the houses, embowered in the deep woods, roving everywhere in search of booty. Suddenly swarms of savages rushed upon them, cutting off the little groups of invaders from each other. Ojeda took his stand with a few men in a small

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enclosure. His companions were all killed by his side. His stanch friend, Juan de la Cosa, faithful to the last, tried to come to his rescue with a handful of men. All were killed but one, and the veteran himself fell, sending with his last breath a message of devotion to his reckless commander. Only the one man who bore it, and carried the tidings to the fleet, was known to have escaped from the slaughter. Ojeda himself was among the missing.

Some days afterwards, his remaining followers, exploring the coast and firing guns, in the desperate hope of finding some who might have fled the carnage, discovered the fiery adventurer lying on the roots of a mangrove by the water-side, so wasted with hunger and fatigue that he could not speak. He had escaped in the darkness from the fatal village and made his way to the sea-shore.

Shortly afterwards the squadron of Nicuesa came in sight. The ruined and fallen Ojeda shrank from meeting his powerful rival. But the latter generously forgave his former enmity, rescued him in his distress, and welcomed him on his ship.

So soon as Ojeda was able to march, the two led a force of four hundred men, with several

OJEDA'S VOYAGES

horses, to take vengeance on the brave villagers. They approached in the dead of night and surrounded the place. There was not a sound but the shrill screeching of parrots in the tree-tops. But this did not arouse the sleeping natives. Suddenly they were horribly awakened by the war-cry of Spain, — “Santiago!” and the darkness was illumined by flames bursting from their cabins. In a moment the place was filled with shrieking women, who, seeing the horses, the first that had been landed on this coast, careering between the blazing houses, mistook them and their riders for some new species of fearful monsters. The carnage was indescribable. The Spaniards gave no quarter and glutted their savage vengeance.

After this Nicuesa sailed for Veragua; and Ojeda gave up the idea of settling in a region where he had won little gold, and which was so valiantly defended. He sailed to a point on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Darien, which he fortified and called San Sebastian. Here the Spaniards soon fell into desperate straits. Disease, hunger, and the implacable hostility of the natives, with their deadly poisoned arrows, made frightful inroads into their numbers.

PIONEER SPANIARDS

Imagine their surprise when a strange sail one day appeared in the offing. Who could this be, on that lonely coast? It proved to be a reckless scoundrel named Talavera, with a crew of seventy select cut-throats. These villains, the scum of the vagabonds who had drifted to San Domingo, had heard such accounts of the abundance of gold in this new region that they had determined to come to it. The fact of not having ship or money did not long stand in their way. They went stealthily to a point where a vessel was taking on stores, surprised and seized it, and embarked to join Ojeda. They knew nothing of navigation, but they managed to reach him. He paid them in gold for the supplies they brought, and thus his followers were saved from starvation. But Enciso did not appear, and the spirit of discontent was growing. Ojeda saw that something must be done. He offered to go himself to San Domingo for more men and supplies, if his followers would promise to remain orderly under his lieutenant, the afterwards renowned conqueror of Peru, Francisco Pizarro. They agreed. At the same time Talavera and his pirate crew, disappointed of finding abundant wealth at San Sebastian, resolved to return to San Domingo at

OJEDA'S VOYAGES

all hazards. They were willing to take Ojeda, no doubt expecting that his influence would be strong enough to save their necks.

Scarcely were they at sea when Ojeda claimed to command the vessel. The pirate captain had no idea of surrendering the control. A violent quarrel ensued. The whole crew backed their leader, overpowered Ojeda, and laid him by the heels to cool his wrath in irons. In vain he cursed them for cowards and curs and offered to fight the whole of them, if they would give him his sword and a clear deck and come on two at a time. They merely jeered at his rage.

But his turn came soon. The vessel ran into a gale. Talavera and his cut-throats knew little of navigation and less of those seas, whereas Ojeda was a skilful sailor and had had experience of those waters. They made a truce with him, took off his irons, and put him in charge of the vessel as pilot. He did the best that he could, but that was only to beach the shattered craft on the southern coast of Cuba. Now the outlaws were in a desperate plight indeed, stranded on a wild shore, hundreds of miles from any habitation of white men. Their only hope lay in tramping to the eastern end of the island and

PIONEER SPANIARDS

seeking some means of crossing to Hispaniola (San Domingo). Accordingly they set out.

Cuba was still uncolonized, and besides its native population, its woods were full of Indians who had fled from the cruelty of their conquerors on Hispaniola. These combined and frequently attacked the castaways. Ojeda and his men easily repulsed them, but decided to keep close to the sea, that they might be less exposed to such assaults. Following this course, they became involved in an endless stretch of salt marshes. Day after day they struggled on, sometimes almost waist-deep in mire, surrounded by water, yet consumed with thirst. For food they had only a little cassava-bread and raw roots. At night they climbed upon the twisted roots of the mangrove-trees which grow in the water, and there made their bed. Some were drowned in swimming across rivers and inlets; others were smothered in the mire. Altogether, their situation was desperate. They spent thirty days in the interminable morass and lost half of their number.

At last, when some of the survivors in utter despair laid themselves down to die, Ojeda and a few of the stronger, still struggling forward,

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came to dry land and found a path that led to an Indian village. The native chief, seeing their exhausted condition, cared for them tenderly, sent a large party with provisions to relieve and bring in on their shoulders the stragglers in the marsh, and entertained all the strangers with the kindest hospitality until they were able to travel. But this lesson of humanity from heathen savages was wasted on these Christian Spaniards.

When Ojeda's party were restored to health they continued their journey and finally reached Jamaica, where there was a Spanish settlement. After a time Ojeda set sail for San Domingo, but his piratical companions preferred remaining in Jamaica to facing the risk of a halter.

Diego Columbus (the Admiral's son) was now Governor of Hispaniola.¹ So soon as he heard the story of Ojeda's adventures, he sent a strong force of soldiers to arrest the villains in Jamaica. They were brought to San Domingo in chains, and Talavera was hanged, with a number of his accomplices. "Never," says Washington Irving, "had vagabonds traveled farther or toiled harder to arrive at the gallows."

Ojeda's end was less tragic, but scarcely more

¹ See "The World's Discoverers," page 92.

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cheerful. In San Domingo he learned that his partner, Enciso, had long since sailed for the colony in Panama. He tried hard to raise an expedition to follow him, but he had no money, and nobody would lend him any. He had acquired the reputation of a man who always rushed into danger and got only fighting where more prudent men got gold. He was never able to obtain another command, and sank into dire poverty. His proud spirit was broken by neglect, and the aspiring cavalier who once led the "Ocean Chivalry" died so poor that he left not enough money to pay for his burial.

Chapter II

AMERICUS VESPUCIUS — OUR COUNTRY'S NAME

Chapter II

AMERICUS VESPUCIUS — OUR COUNTRY'S NAME

Controversy about Vespuccius. — What is known about him. — What he claimed to have done. — How the name America originated. — First applied to Brazil. — Extended to all South America. — Then to the whole continent.

THE man whose name our country bears deserves at least a passing notice. Though this work seeks to avoid controversy and to state only accepted facts, in this case the importance of the subject may excuse us for departing from this rule. It surely is worth our while to learn something about the man whose name is borne by the New World, and to try to determine how much claim he really has to be enrolled among great discoverers.

I think we shall find that Amerigo Vespucci, as was his name, has been treated by the great majority of writers with some degree of injustice. Because an honor was thrust upon him which he never sought, they have looked upon him as a

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cunning impostor, who craftily planned to reap honors which belonged to another. In the view of these writers, he was a mere landsman, "a beef contractor," who had picked up a smattering of nautical knowledge and in a very subordinate capacity made some voyages, upon which he based the most extravagant claims of great discoveries, and, these claims being credited by people in Europe who knew no better, was hailed as an illustrious man whose name was worthy to be borne by the New World. In the view of another and far smaller number of writers, Vespucci was a man of very great ability, who made remarkable voyages, achieved brilliant discoveries, and probably was the first person who laid eyes on the mainland of America. Perhaps neither party is wholly right. Let us glance at the facts about which there is no dispute.

Amerigo Vespucci was born at Florence, in the year 1452, of a well-to-do family, and received a fairly good education. He engaged in mercantile pursuits and finally went to Spain and became connected with a man who took a large contract for furnishing caravels for foreign exploration. He had already devoted much at-

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tention to the study of astronomy and map-making; his business relations threw him much in the company of navigators; and the result was that he sailed as a pilot and scientific man with Ojeda in his first voyage, in 1499. Thus he gained a knowledge of the Pearl Coast and observed the manners and customs of the natives, whom he afterwards described most interestingly. Later, it is said, he made other voyages. Later still he was appointed Pilot Major of Spain, having been selected from among many eminent navigators for that highly responsible office, in which he had supervision of all maps and charts, and was charged with the duty of examining pilots in the use of nautical instruments. He was well acquainted with Columbus, who esteemed him very highly and warmly commended him to his son. These circumstances show his standing and prove that he was not a mere landsman who palmed himself off on ignorant people.

On the other hand, he certainly was careless and inaccurate in his dates; vain and boastful, never naming the captain on any voyage on which he sailed, but in downright words claiming for himself all the credit of whatever was accom-

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plished ; given to exaggeration and sometimes to sheer invention. These facts are evident in his writings and have created a prejudice against him, inclining many readers to believe him wholly a fraud. But this seems to be a too sweeping condemnation. Braggarts have sometimes shown themselves to be really brave, and persons addicted to exaggeration may yet be truthful in the main. Let us, therefore, not too hastily condemn Amerigo Vespucci, — or Americus Vespucius, as we call him, using the Latin form of his name, — but rather try to get at some of the main facts in this controversy.

First, let us note that there is not any dispute whatever as to who led the way to the New World. If it was to be named for its discoverer, it should have been called Columbia. On this point all the world is agreed. The only question is as to who first sighted the mainland. According to the accepted account, Columbus, in his third voyage, in 1498, first reached the coast of South America, and thus was the discoverer of the American continent, as well as of the New World, in general. But here comes in Vespucci's claim, which was published some years later. According to this story, he sailed

**Lettera di Amerigo vespucci
delle isole non onamente
tronate in quattro
Inoi viaggi.**



FRONTISPIECE TO THE FIRST EDITION OF VESPUCCI'S LETTERS

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on May 10, 1497 — note the year ; made a land-fall somewhere on this continent — his usual inaccuracy makes it difficult to determine at what point ; coasted it for many hundreds of miles ; had a number of adventures with the natives, whom he describes quite minutely ; and finally returned to Spain with a cargo of Indian captives. Of course, if this account is true, there is no room for dispute : Vespucci discovered the American continent. But, say the admirers of Columbus, this alleged voyage of Vespucci, in 1497, is a wicked invention, intended to rob the great discoverer of a part of his just fame. They make, in especial, these two points against the Florentine : (1) His account of this voyage relates almost identically the same incidents that occurred in Ojeda's first voyage (see the preceding chapter), on which he undoubtedly was present as a pilot. These occurrences, they say, he put into an imaginary voyage, from which he carefully omitted Ojeda's name, and to which he cunningly gave the date 1497. (2) When King Ferdinand tried to reduce as much as possible the claims of Columbus as a discoverer, he would have gladly welcomed any shadow of proof that anybody else had first reached the mainland.

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But none was forthcoming. On the contrary, Ojeda, who was one of the witnesses before the royal commissioners, expressly stated that he made his first voyage in 1499, that he had Vespucci with him as a pilot, that he touched the Pearl coast of South America, and there found evidences that *Columbus had been there the previous year*. The testimony of all the witnesses went to show that Columbus's voyage of 1498 was regarded as the discovery of the continent.

These points certainly are strong against Vespucci ; but now comes one of another kind. The question of the reality of his first alleged voyage has nothing whatever to do with the naming of our continent. It was on quite other grounds that the name "America" was first put on a map. He claimed to have made other voyages ; and there is reason to believe that he did. Some eminent writers have even maintained that he was one of the most daring navigators and brilliant discoverers of that eventful age, in fact, that he was second only to Columbus. Let us give particular attention to his story of a voyage so remarkable that, if it really was made in all particulars as he says, it deserves to be recorded among the world's great achievements.

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He sailed, he says, from Lisbon, in May, 1501, crossed the Atlantic in "the vilest weather ever seen by man," and reached the coast of the country now called Brazil. This he followed southward, in some places having hostile encounters with ferocious Indians. Of these he says, "They feed on human flesh. I saw one very wicked wretch who boasted, as if it were no small honor to himself, that he had eaten three hundred men. I saw also a certain town, in which I stayed about twenty-seven days, where salted human flesh was suspended from the roofs of the houses, even as we suspend the flesh of the wild boar from the beams of the kitchen, after drying and smoking it, or as we hang up strings of sausages." The climate and the country, however, seemed to him so exquisitely delightful that he thought that the earthly paradise could not be far away.

Then came a long stretch down the coast which brought him to a noble bay, perhaps the one where afterwards the city of Rio de Janeiro was built. Thence he sailed still south, as far, it may be, as the mouth of the Rio de la Plata. Then he turned south-east and struck out into the open ocean. This change of direction, it must be said,

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throws doubt on the whole story ; for it was not probable that a discoverer following a most interesting coast, where no ship had ever been before, would suddenly leave it for the trackless ocean. According to his account, he sailed on and on, through stormy seas and bitter cold, heading for nowhere in particular, until he came to an island. This his admirers identify with South Georgia, which lies alone in the broad Atlantic, in latitude 54° , the same as that of Tierra del Fuego, only 36 degrees from the South Pole ! Thence he headed homeward and reached Lisbon safely in September, 1502. This account, his critics say, he borrowed from that of a real voyage made in 1503, by Gonzalo Coelho, who followed the coast of Brazil as far south as the mouth of the Rio de la Plata.

Whether or not this extraordinary achievement is to be credited, one thing is certain : his story put a new name on the map, the name *America*. Its history is remarkable. In the year after his return, Vespucci wrote a letter to Lorenzo de Medici, in which he uses the expression, " those new countries which we have sought and found. It is proper to call them *a new world*." In employing it Vespucci did not have in mind any



INDIANS BRINGING GIFTS TO VESPUCCI

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part of those countries which Columbus had visited. They were still believed to belong to Asia. He referred only to those regions which he professed to have lately viewed. He writes, "I have found" — this arrogant phrase is one of the things that have created a prejudice against him — "a continent more thickly inhabited by peoples and animals than our Europe, or Asia, or Africa." If he had been called upon to state the relative claims of Columbus and himself, he probably would have put the matter somewhat in this way: "Columbus discovered countries which are parts of Asia; but I have found a continent far to the south of the Equator, separated by hundreds of leagues of ocean from his discoveries, and never before visited, nor even dreamed of. Therefore it is proper to call it a new world." Neither he nor anybody else at that time had the faintest idea of a vast American continent stretching well-nigh from pole to pole. This notion of the land of Vespucci's alleged discoveries, as wholly distinct from the lands which Columbus had found, is clearly proved by an old map which shows a great continental island marked "Terra Sanctæ Crucis, Sive Novus Mundus" ("Land of the Holy Cross, or the New World"). This was

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the idea then entertained as to the country now known as Brazil, the land of Vespucci's alleged finding. A small island marked "Spagnola," with a few others about it, indicated the discoveries of Columbus. Compared with the other, they look very small.

Vespucci's letter to Medici had a remarkable career. It made a thrilling announcement. Hitherto three quarters of the globe had been known, Europe, Asia, and Africa. Now the fourth quarter had been found; and Vespucci was the man who had found it. His letter was taken up by learned people, translated into Latin, German, and French, put through various editions, and widely read. It made a tremendous sensation, such a sensation as Columbus never had made, with his insignificant discovery of some outlying parts of Asia!

The excitement was especially great among Vespucci's countrymen in Italy, who knew little of the real history of discovery and were willing to take his word for much, and in various parts of Europe not directly active in exploration. The drollest part of the whole story is that the name "America" originated at what we should call "a fresh-water college," among people who

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knew nothing in a practical way of the whole subject. From the little college of Saint Dié, in Lorraine, on the eastern border of France, there was issued, in 1507, a Latin version of one of Vespucci's letters, along with a short geographical treatise by one Martin Waldseemüller. This little tract contained the suggestion that, since Americus Vespucius had discovered the Fourth Part of the globe, it should be called after him, America. So the mischief was begun, and it spread very rapidly. No less than three other editions of Waldseemüller's treatise were issued in the same year, and thus thousands of people were reading its misleading suggestion. No admirer of Columbus at that time raised any objection, for the simple reason that nobody supposed that any injury would be done to his fame, the two fields of discovery being held to be absolutely distinct.

Waldseemüller's proposition involved more than he dreamed. When exploration had proceeded further, and Brazil was ascertained to be part of a great continent, some short and expressive name was needed for the latter. People could not go on forever calling it the "Land of Paroquets" and "Land of the Holy Cross,"

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as it was designated on certain old maps. Therefore the name America was applied to the whole of South America. This was the second stage of the great mistake.

As time went on South America was ascertained to be itself part of a great continent. Then there was published by Mercator, a famous geographer, a map, which is here reproduced, on which, for the first time, the name America was used to designate the whole Western Hemisphere. This last stage of the great mistake was not reached until 1538, many years after both Columbus and Vespuccius were in their graves. Thus the naming of our continent was finally due to the arbitrary procedure of a map-maker, who applied to it a name first given, in error, to a small part of it.

Altogether, it is a curious story this, of the gradual process by which a name was bestowed on the Western World, not in honor of the great genius who led Europe to it across the Sea of Darkness, but of a comparatively obscure man whose claim to have discovered anything at all rests wholly on his own statement. One naturally asks what was the secret of Vespucci's first success, out of which, by a series of mistakes, all the rest



THE FIRST MAP ON WHICH THE NAME AM



IS APPLIED TO THE WHOLE WESTERN CONTINENT

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grew. Undoubtedly it lay in his very entertaining letters. Their style was lively; they were the first popular account of the strange things that he had seen or *imagined* in the new world; and they caught the ear of Europe. Columbus did not write any such letters. In those which he sent to his sovereigns there were brief descriptions and enthusiastic statements, sometimes mistaken, but always sincere. But he was too busy with actual exploration to indulge in fanciful accounts. Not so Vespucci. He gave a free rein to his imagination and wrote for effect. In that wonder-loving age people were ready to believe anything. His extravagant tales, as, for instance, of a race of giants inhabiting the island of Curaçao, or of a people who commonly lived to the age of 150 years, fell in with the notions generally entertained of the New World as a land of marvels. He could hardly make a statement too wild to be believed. Then came the happy chance of his letters being seized upon, printed and reprinted by thousands, and scattered all over Europe. They gave to the people of the Old World the first readable account of the inhabitants of the New, and they produced a literary sensation.

The following extract from one will give an

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idea of these vivid letters, whose effect was so unexpected and so far-reaching. He says of the people of the Pearl Coast, "They swim wonderfully well, and the women better than the men ; for we have found and seen them many times two leagues [about six miles] at sea, without any help whatever in swimming. Their arms are bows and arrows, well made, except that they have no iron, nor any other kind of hard metal. Instead of iron, they use the teeth of animals or fish, or a bit of wood well burnt at the point. In some places the women use these bows. When they go to war they take their women with them ; not because they fight, but because they carry the provisions in rear of the men. A woman carries a burden on her back which a man would not carry, for thirty or forty leagues [from 90 to 120 miles], as we have seen many times." These people it seems, lived in great communal houses, such as those which the Spaniards found occupied by the natives of Mexico. Says Vespucci, "In some places they are of such length and width that we found six hundred souls in one single house. We found villages of only thirteen houses where there were four thousand inhabitants."

Yet, in fairness to Vespucci, we ought to re-

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member that he was only indirectly responsible for the naming of the Western Hemisphere. He did not solicit, or expect, or even know it, since it did not occur until he had been dead nearly thirty years. As we have seen, in his claim to have discovered "a new world," he evidently had not the least notion of setting himself up as a rival of Columbus. He meant to say that he had done something greater! Other people did the mischief of the naming.

Chapter III

VASCO NUÑEZ DE BALBOA, DISCOVERER OF
THE PACIFIC

Chapter III

VASCO NUÑEZ DE BALBOA, DISCOVERER OF THE PACIFIC

Balboa unexpectedly appears on Enciso's ship. — Planting a Colony in Darien. — Balboa succeeds in making himself Sole Ruler. — His Brilliant Administration. — He sets out to seek the Great Sea. — He Discovers the Pacific. — He returns to Darien laden with Gold and Pearls. — Appointment of Pedrarias to supersede him. — Famine and Sickness ravage the Colony. — Balboa builds and launches Ships on the Pacific. — His Great Plan thwarted by the Jealousy of Pedrarias. — Trial and Execution of Balboa.

LET us go back to Ojeda's partner, Enciso. When he sailed from Panama he carried, quite unknowingly, one of the greatest heroes of those adventurous times. After he was well away from the land, imagine his surprise at seeing a man emerge from a cask! At first he was very angry and vowed that he would put the man ashore on a desert island. But his wrath was finally appeased.

The stowaway was a tall, well-knit fellow, with reddish hair, bronzed cheeks, and a bright eye. His name was Vasco Nuñez de Balboa. He

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came of an old family near Palos, in Spain, had sailed with Bastides in a voyage of discovery along the coast of Panama, and had finally settled as a farmer in Hispaniola. But he was a true soldier of fortune, loose and prodigal in his habits, and was soon overwhelmed with debt. Enciso's expedition offered an alluring prospect of profitable adventure. But, a guard having been planted to detain fugitive debtors, his problem was that of escaping his creditors. He finally eluded their watchfulness by having himself hauled from his farm to the vessel in a cask which was supposed to contain provisions. The world before long heard from the contents of that cask.

After Enciso had reached Cartagena, one day a little brigantine came into the harbor. Its commander, Francisco Pizarro, who had been left by Ojeda as his lieutenant at San Sebastian, told Enciso the story of the colony's misfortunes. After they had waited long for the return of Ojeda, famine, sickness, and the Indians' poisoned arrows had so reduced their numbers that they resolved to return to Hispaniola. They killed and salted their remaining horses and put to sea in two brigantines. One of these foundered in

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a gale, and Pizarro's vessel contained the last remnant of Ojeda's expedition.

The other governor, Nicuesa, too, had met with terrible experiences by shipwreck, famine, and the hostility of the Indians. Of his six hundred men but one hundred remained. He continued to search, however, for a place suitable for his colony. At last he found one and called it Nombre de Dios. It later became famed as the port from which the Spanish galleons sailed with their cargoes of silver brought from Peru in vessels and across the Isthmus in mule-trains. This was the first habitation of the white race on the continent of America. Here Nicuesa and his famished band held their lonely watch, waiting for supplies that never came, eating reptiles and regarding a piece of alligator as a dainty dish.

Enciso prevailed on Pizarro's crew to abandon their intention of leaving the colony and to return to San Sebastian, whither he was bound. He, too, was destined to encounter cruel reverses. Just as he was entering the harbor his vessel was wrecked. The crew escaped to Pizarro's brigantine, but the horses, swine, and all the colonial supplies were swept away. Not only were the provisions lost, but the buildings which Ojeda

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had put up were found in ashes, having been burned by the Indians. It was decided to abandon San Sebastian. But whither should they



MAP OF DARIEN

go? Then Balboa came forward and described a very attractive village on the banks of a river called Darien, which he had seen when he was

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with Bastides' expedition exploring this region. The Spaniards sailed thither, after a sharp fight routed the inhabitants, and took possession of their village, with a large quantity of food and cotton, and with gold ornaments to the value of fifty thousand dollars. From this time forth, Darien was the headquarters of the Spaniards.

Now behold Balboa landed in the country where he was destined to win renown! We shall see his success built on the downfall of the two governors, Enciso and Nicuesa. The former soon provoked the opposition of his followers by arbitrary measures. Balboa diligently fomented the ill-feeling by pointing out that Darien was situated within the territory assigned to Nicuesa, and therefore Enciso had no authority there. The men promptly acted on this hint by refusing obedience to him. Then it was decided to send to Nombre de Dios for Nicuesa to come to Darien as governor. But before he arrived busy tongues were at work, declaring that he ruled in very high-handed fashion, and that he would be even worse than Enciso. In consequence, when he sailed into the harbor he was met by an angry rabble, who refused to receive him as governor and actually chased him into

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the woods. Here again we see the work of the shrewd Balboa. He, however, interceded for Nicuesa to the extent that no violence was done him; and since he would not return to Nombre de Dios, he was given a vessel, the worst in the harbor, in which to return to Spain. He embarked with a few faithful followers and was never again heard of. So ended, in tragic gloom, the career of the brilliant cavalier who had left Spain with six hundred men at his beck.

The colony was now in a state of revolution. Having deposed one of the royal governors and driven away the other, the men chose Balboa and a man named Zamudio to rule them as *alcaldes* (magistrates). Shortly afterwards Enciso's friends prevailed on the rest to let him go away, in order to plead his cause in person before the King. To present his side of the case Balboa despatched his colleague, Zamudio, along with him, and, to secure the royal treasurer's influence in his behalf, he secretly sent a round sum of gold; for though the Spaniards had little food, they had plenty of gold, the spoils of Indian villages.

Thus Balboa had, within a short time, risen by audacity and cunning from being a mere interloper in the expedition to the place of sole

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commander. His ability justified his elevation. For the next two years we find him ruling the colony as civil magistrate and leading the men in war with equal success. He had an amazing faculty of winning the confidence of the Indian chiefs. One after another had become his friend and ally. Others who resisted him were routed, and their villages yielded a splendid booty in gold.

Of course, there were the usual romantic expeditions in which the Conquistadors were sure to engage; at one time to find a fabled temple so rich that all its belongings were of solid gold, at another a region whose inhabitants, it was said, needed only to stretch nets across the streams to catch the gold that was swept down by freshets in nuggets as large as pigeons' eggs. Balboa did not find either, but he did hear of something that was no myth. More than once he was told, in the course of his forays, of a vast ocean beyond the mountains. Then the purpose began to form in his mind to discover that ocean and explore its shores. He wrote a letter to the King and sent it along with a remittance of gold, informing him of this alleged ocean and asking that a thousand

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men be sent him, in order that he might undertake its discovery. This certainly was an audacious request from one who actually was in the position of a rebel ruling a revolted colony. But he knew Ferdinand well enough to feel assured that he would forgive anything to the successful adventurer who should add to his dominions and pour gold into his treasury.

Before any reply to this request came, he received a disturbing letter from Zamudio. The King had heard Enciso's complaint, and had given judgment in his favor. Worse yet, Balboa was to be summoned to Spain to answer for his treatment of Nicuesa. He saw that but one course could save him. He must act immediately on his project of exploration. If that should be successful, he was sure of Ferdinand's favor. He was still free, since the royal order had not yet come, and he resolved to waste no time. It was a tremendous undertaking. There were dense tropical forests to be threaded, a lofty mountain-ridge to be scaled, and fierce tribes to be overcome. For this task he had less than two hundred able-bodied men. But if he shrank from it, ruin and death stared him in the face.

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On the 1st of September, 1513, he sailed away with a hundred and ninety men and several of those savage bloodhounds which always struck terror into the Indians, together with a number of native guides. The expedition was embarked in a brigantine and nine large pirogues. Arrived at Coyba, the domain of a friendly chief, he left these craft under the care of about half of his men and struck off into the mountains. The march was extremely difficult. The Spaniards, encumbered with their heavy armor and weapons and oppressed by the tropical heat, had to climb rocky precipices and to struggle through dense and tangled vegetation. On the third day they reached a village whose inhabitants had fled. It was necessary to procure guides acquainted with the wilderness that lay before the Spaniards. Balboa sent some of his Indians, who persuaded the reluctant chief to visit him. Then he so won the Indian's heart that he furnished him with guides and pointed out a lofty ridge from the top of which the ocean was to be seen.

From this place Balboa sent back a number of his men who had fallen ill from fatigue and the heat, and made a fresh start. In the next four days the Spaniards did not succeed in

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advancing more than about thirty miles. Then they came into the territory of a chief who was a deadly enemy to the tribe that had furnished the guides. Seeing the small number of Span-



INDIANS KILLED BY DOGS

iards, he attacked them with reckless fury. But the first discharge of fire-arms struck dismay into his followers. They fled and were hotly pursued by the Spaniards and their ferocious dogs. Many were killed, and several who were taken prisoners were deliberately given to be torn to pieces by the bloodhounds. The village yielded a large quantity of gold and jewels. It lay at the foot of the last mountain that was to be climbed.

Leaving there a number of men who were

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disabled by wounds, and taking fresh guides, Balboa started off with but sixty-seven men, in the cool hour of daybreak, for the final ascent. About ten o'clock the explorers emerged from the forest and came to the foot of an eminence from which the guides said that the ocean was visible. Balboa left his party behind, in order that nobody might share his honor, and climbed alone to the mountain-top.

Then what a vision burst upon him! Beyond a wide intervening belt of rocks and forest and green savannahs, glittering in the morning sun, lay that vast mysterious ocean which Columbus and others had conjectured, but which no European had yet beheld. It was indeed a glorious discovery. Yet, in that day, who could foresee what it meant to unborn generations?

Balboa summoned his followers. At the sight of the ocean they were so carried away with delight that they embraced him and one another. The *Te Deum* was chanted, a cross was erected, and from that lofty height the leader took possession of the vast ocean, with all its islands and surrounding lands, in the name of his master. *Mar del Sur* (Southern Ocean) was the name by which it became known among the Spaniards.

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Magellan, eight years later, was the first to call it the Pacific, when he entered it from the stormy Atlantic and was impressed with its majestic tranquillity.

The discovery was made on Sept. 26, 1513. Twenty days had been consumed in travers-



BALBOA TAKING POSSESSION OF THE PACIFIC

ing a distance which probably did not exceed forty miles, so great were the difficulties to be overcome.

The bold adventurers now descended the western slope of the mountains, in quest of the rich kingdoms of which they had heard. They soon came to the borders of a warlike chief who,

VASCO NUÑEZ DE BALBOA

seeing their small numbers, forbade them to set foot in his dominions. But a volley from the arquebuses, followed by the savage bloodhounds, slew many and made the rest sue for peace with these terrible strangers who wielded thunder and lightning. To propitiate their favor, the chief brought a quantity of wrought gold, — not five hundred pounds, however, we may be sure, though the imaginative Spanish chroniclers make that statement.

Friendship having been established, Balboa quartered himself in the village for some days, sent back for his men who had been left at the foot of the mountain, and despatched three parties by different paths to find the best route to the sea. One of these was led by Pizarro. It was not the future conqueror of Peru, however, but Alonzo Martin, who was the successful one. After two days' journey he came to a beach where two canoes lay. He pushed one into the water, stepped into it, and called his companion to witness that he was the first European to embark on that sea.

On reaching the coast, Balboa, taking a banner on which were painted the Virgin and Child, and under them the royal arms of Spain, and draw-

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ing his sword, waded knee-deep into the water and solemnly proclaimed that ocean, with all adjacent lands, from pole to pole, to be the property of the Castilian sovereigns, "as long as the world endures, and until the final day of judgment." He was a better discoverer than prophet, the twentieth century testifies.

Altogether, the Spaniards spent about a month on the shore of the Pacific, receiving from the Indian chiefs truly royal gifts in gold and pearls, which were gathered thereabouts in great abundance. They carried away some magnificent specimens, to be sent to Spain. But what most of all aroused the interest of the great explorer was the report of a country, far to the south, abounding in gold, where the inhabitants used certain quadrupeds to carry burdens. A figure moulded in clay to represent these animals seemed to the Spaniards somewhat like a deer, somewhat like a camel, for as yet none of them had seen a llama. From that time Balboa's busy mind was filled with the thought of sailing to that mysterious realm and conquering it.

He was now ready to strike across the mountains towards Darien. With his usual skill in conciliating the natives, he had made friends

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wherever he had gone, and he and his men had collected a royal treasure in gold and pearls. The last chief who entertained him furnished him with a stock of provisions sufficient for several days and sent a number of his subjects to carry the Spaniards' loads.

The homeward march led the adventurers through entirely new scenes and was full of perils. They came to the deserted village of a chief named Poncra, who was reputed to be enormously rich. In the empty houses they found gold ornaments to the value of several thousand dollars. But this was merely enough to sharpen their appetite. Poncra was hunted, found in his hiding-place, and dragged before the conqueror. First persuasion was used, then torture, to compel him to tell where he obtained his gold. In vain the wretched man protested that what the Spaniards had found had been accumulated long ago, that he set no value on the metal, and did not know where to seek it. There is no doubt that this was true. The Indians cared for gold only as bright stuff, suitable for being beaten into trinkets. They were amazed at the Spaniards' greed for it and were quite willing to load them with it, thinking that

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they had the best of the bargain when they received in return a string of glass beads and a few little brass bells. But Balboa was furious at what he considered the obstinacy of the trembling savage, and on the pretext that he was accused by his neighbors of cruelty, delivered him, with three others, to be torn in pieces by dogs.

The path of the victorious invaders was beset by hardships. They almost perished with hunger, in consequence of having loaded their Indian porters with plunder, instead of provisions.

The last hostile encounter was with a powerful chief named Tubanama (whence, it seems, the name Panama), who had eighty wives. Balboa surprised his village and captured him. His people, being then made to ransom him, brought in gold ornaments to the value of many thousands of dollars.

The rest of the homeward march was very exhausting. Balboa himself suffered with fever and was borne in a hammock by Indians. On the 18th of January he reached Darien, having been absent four months and a half. The whole population turned out to welcome the discoverer of the Pacific returning laden with the rich spoils of con-

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quered tribes and followed by a long train of captives, male and female.

Now came a disastrous crisis in the great explorer's career.

As soon as he returned from his famous discovery, he despatched a special envoy to Spain with a letter to the King giving an account of it, with a splendid gift of pearls from himself and his companions, besides the regular tax to the royal treasury, which consisted of one fifth of all profits. Unhappily, the vessel was detained some two months before sailing, and the delay proved fatal. Ferdinand, after listening to the complaint of Enciso, had resolved to appoint another governor for Darien to supersede Balboa. For this post he selected Pedro Arias Davila, commonly known as Pedrarias, a singularly unfit man, but highly recommended by that most accomplished wire-puller, Bishop Fonseca.

The fame of Darien as a country of enormous wealth attracted a host of adventurers, eager to sail with the new governor. Columbus had had difficulty in gathering his scanty crews, and the royal power had been exercised to compel men to embark. Now the trouble was to keep them at home. Hopeful adventurers were willing to

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pay all their expenses to have a chance at the Castilla de Oro (Golden Castle), as the Spaniards now called Darien. Pedrarias was licensed to take out fifteen hundred men. By various devices more than two thousand sailed.

Scarcely had the splendid armament put to sea when Balboa's belated envoy arrived. He delivered his letters, told of Balboa's brilliant discovery, and laid before Ferdinand's greedy eyes the wrought-gold ornaments and the huge pearls with which he was entrusted. Immediately Balboa rose to immense importance. The man who had collected such treasures could not be a usurper and was not to be lightly set aside. The King regretted his harshness towards him and determined to make him a colleague of Pedrarias, entitled to equal honor. But his appointment was not officially announced for some time.

Pedrarias arrived at Darien and made a triumphal entry into the town, at the head of two thousand men in brilliant array. They found Balboa and his five hundred seasoned veterans wearing cotton clothes, and were banqueted in straw-thatched cabins on roots and cassava-bread, washed down with water. This

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was all very different from what the gay cavaliers expected.

At first Pedrarias treated Balboa with a great show of cordiality. But when he had drawn from him full information about the surrounding region and its chiefs, he began a series of petty persecutions. He hit upon the plan of employing him in enterprises in which he would not be likely to succeed, and thus lowering his prestige.

Soon things were going very ill in the colony. Darien was excessively hot and sickly. The provisions brought from Spain had been consumed. Famine and disease combined made fearful inroads. Within a short time seven hundred of the dashing cavaliers who had followed Pedrarias were dead. A ship-load sailed away for Cuba, and another for Spain. Of those who could not get away, some who had mortgaged estates at home to fit themselves out gallantly, died of actual hunger. Others were seen to barter a garment of gorgeous silk or rich brocade for a pound of bread. The expeditions, too, which Pedrarias had set on foot had failed disastrously. One of the most calamitous was one sent to the Pearl Islands, which Balboa had seen

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in the Pacific. It was led by Morales and Pizarro.

These two ferocious soldiers reached their goal and got a splendid treasure in choice pearls. But their excessive cruelty aroused the whole country against them. At an assault on a village they met with so fierce a resistance that they were glad to get away. Now their path was beset everywhere by lurking foes shooting their arrows from behind rocks and bushes. Their situation grew desperate. They lighted their camp-fires at night and stole away. But the enemy were quickly on their tracks and around them again. Nine days and nights they were hunted through woods and swamps and over mountains. At last, after almost incredible hardships, they reached Darien, exhausted and emaciated, but still clinging to some of the treasure they had gained in the islands. One of the pearls was put up at auction and was bought by Pedrarias. His wife presented it to the Empress, who, in return, gave her four thousand ducats.

Another expedition was defeated by the chief Tubanama. Still another, consisting of a hundred and eighty men, was overwhelmed and annihi-

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lated: only an Indian boy escaped to tell of the massacre.

The colony had been so weakened by its losses, and the natives so emboldened by success, that the Spaniards lived in constant dread. The friends of Balboa did not fail to point out the contrast between this series of disasters and his career of conquest and successful administration. The Governor himself was full of apprehensions that he might be recalled, and Balboa appointed to his old place. Then the Bishop of Darien suggested to Pedrarias that, instead of treating the bold adventurer as an enemy, it would be better policy to form an alliance with him by giving him one of his daughters in marriage. The Governor liked the idea, for Balboa was a man by all means to be conciliated. The King's letter had come appointing him a colleague of Pedrarias, and nothing but the latter's jealousy stood in the way of their working together harmoniously. He proposed the alliance, and Balboa gladly accepted the offer. A written agreement was signed for the marriage to be solemnized so soon as the young lady could be brought from Spain.

Now Balboa, once more on the crest of the

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wave of prosperity, began to carry out a project of extraordinary boldness and originality. He wished to explore the Pacific coast, and since there were no vessels on that side, nor any facilities for building any, he determined to cut and shape the timbers on the Atlantic coast and to transport them, along with the anchors and cordage, across the Isthmus. It was a stupendous undertaking, but it was actually carried out. Fancy what it was for men, since there were not any draught-animals, to toil up the rough mountain paths and across rocky gorges, under the scorching rays of a tropical sun, carrying the heavy timbers. Of course, the burden of it all fell on the poor, enslaved Indians. Hundreds of them perished before the terrible task was accomplished. But that was of small account, and the old Spanish writers gave no heed to it when they proudly wrote of this herculean work that "none but Spaniards could ever have conceived or persisted in such an undertaking; and no commander in the New World but Vasco Nuñez could have conducted it to a successful issue."

Now behold two brigantines afloat on the Pacific! What a proud moment was that for Balboa when he launched the first European

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vessel on the ocean which he had discovered! He embarked and sailed first to the Pearl Islands. Then he headed south, and if the wind had continued favorable, probably he would have discovered Peru. But the wind changed, and he put back, resolved to finish two more brigantines before starting on his great voyage of exploration. He needed some iron and pitch, and he sent across the mountains for these. Fatal delay! It cost him the discovery and conquest of Peru and brought his head to the block. Not the wind only, but the Governor had changed. Busybodies had been at work, suggesting to him that Balboa and his officers were engaged in a plot to set up an independent government on the Pacific coast and throw off allegiance to the Spanish crown. Moreover, they said, Balboa had no intention of marrying his daughter, being wholly under the influence of a beautiful Indian girl. The weak old Governor was wrought to a paroxysm of jealous fury. He determined to arrest Balboa instantly. A letter expressed in the friendliest terms invited him to come at once to Darien to confer about matters of importance. For fear, however, that Balboa might suspect a trap and decline to walk into it, he ordered

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Pizarro immediately to collect all the men he could
to go and arrest his former commander.

Balboa, all unsuspecting of evil, so soon as he
received the Governor's letter set out for Darien.
On the way he met Pizarro with an armed
party. When the latter told him that he was a
traitor, he was amazed, but submitted quietly
and was taken to Darien in irons. He was
brought to trial, charged with treasonable inten-
tions, and the accusation was supported by
some scraps of evidence, chiefly manufactured.
Balboa pleaded his innocence. In vain he
petitioned the Justiciary that he had at his bid-
ding on the other coast four vessels and three
hundred followers; that he needed only
some provisions and sail away, to find some
other country, where they might all have been far
safer than in the Governor's reach and well provided
for their lives; and that his ready
obedience to the Governor's summons was the
proof of his absolute innocence. His con-
clusion. The Justiciary,
however, Governor, found him guilty,
and sentenced him to mercy, in consideration
of his services. Pedrarias would not enter-
tain the plea. No; if he was guilty, let

Now
Pacific!
Balboa w

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him die, and the sooner the better. He sentenced him, along with four others, to be beheaded at once.

The populace were moved to tears at the fate of their idol, the man who had founded Darien and given it all the success it had known, and whose fame had gone thence through all the world. He met his end with calm courage, protesting his innocence to the last. So perished, in the prime of his manhood, one of the world's pet heroes.

Chapter IV

JUAN PONCE DE LEON, DISCOVERER OF FLORIDA

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JUAN PONCE DE LEON, DISCOVERER OF FLORIDA

Ponce de Leon conquers Porto Rico. — He sails in search of the Fountain of Perpetual Youth. — He re-discovers Florida. He attempts to conquer it and is killed. — Ayllon's dastardly Raid and its Punishment.

AMONG the adventurous Spanish cavaliers who sailed with Columbus on his second voyage, eager to learn more of the wonderful land beyond the Sea of Darkness, was a seasoned soldier of the Moorish Wars, Juan Ponce de Leon, "lion by name and lion by nature," as a poet wrote of him. At a later time we find him placed as military commander at the eastern end of Hispaniola, or San Domingo. Hence his eyes were naturally turned eastward to the beautiful island of Boriquen, afterwards called Porto Rico. He visited it and was hospitably entertained by a chief. The sight of its swelling mountains and its smiling valleys watered by sparkling streams, inflamed his heart with the desire to conquer and

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possess this fair land. Moreover, when he inquired about gold, as the Spaniards always did, the Indians pointed to the mountains. That was enough. The prospect of gold fevered his brain. He returned to Hispaniola, asked, and obtained leave to lead an expedition to the island.

The natives did not tamely submit. But their resistance was soon overcome.

Ponce de Leon was made governor of the island and had ample opportunity, which he did not neglect, of making himself rich at the expense of the poor Indians.

The oppression and cruelty of the Spaniards soon produced its natural result, an uprising of the natives. The conquerors were so few and the Indians so numerous that for a time things looked serious. But Ponce's vigorous and ruthless hand speedily quenched the flames of war and the hopes of the Indians in blood. One of his most formidable followers was a savage bloodhound named Berezillo. He was so fierce a fighter that he was rated as a soldier, and his master drew for him full pay and allowances. We may remember that Columbus first employed dogs in fighting the natives. The Indians, quite unaccustomed to fierce animals,—

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for the West Indies have no native quadrupeds of any size, — stood scarcely less in awe of these ferocious beasts than of the Spaniards' deadly guns. The insurrection put down, Ponce ruled his island province in the true heart-breaking fashion which the Spanish government vainly sought to check, and had every reason to be content with his lot. Only one thing he lacked — time. Give him years enough, and what might he not achieve? But, alas! he was war-worn, and age was stiffening his limbs.

Then came a legend to his ears that thrilled his heart with hope. The Indians told of a country to the north where there was a river whose waters would restore to perpetual youth whosoever bathed in them. There was an island, too, by name Bimini, where there was said to be a fountain possessing the same miraculous quality.

At least, so the Spaniards understood the Indians. But the fact is that this legend is a good example of the way in which the natives were again and again reported to have said things which they never had the least thought of saying. That famous old traveler and romancer, Sir John Maundeville, whose book was published about a hundred years before Columbus

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was born, told a story of a river in Asia whose waters healed the sick and restored youth to the aged. He knew the fact, he said, because he had tried the water. To-day a child in the nursery would recognize this as a fairy tale. Not so the people of that wonder-loving age. They believed it. The story was handed down from one person to another; and so it easily happened that Ponce or some of his men, always expecting the marvelous, easily put that meaning on something that they had heard from the Indians.

Straightway we see the grizzled, battered veteran manning his little vessels and making sail to seek the magic island. For some distance he followed the northern shore of Hispaniola, then shaped a course to the northwest among the Bahamas. On he went, asking wherever he touched for Bimini. Nobody could tell him of it. In time, seeking the Fountain of Youth, he came to Guanahani, where twenty years earlier, the great discoverer, seeking Cipango and the empire of the Grand Khan, had first set foot in the New World. But nowhere was the magic spring. Still hopeful, he held his course, and yet new islands rose out of the sea before him, but no Bimini. At last, toward the close of

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March, he sighted a long, low, wooded coast. For days baffling winds kept him at a distance, and he hovered in sight of the land of promise.

On Easter Sunday, 1513, bright skies and soft breezes invited him to a nearer approach. The land welcomed him with fragrant odors, as if Nature had arrayed herself for the great Christian festival which, on that day, the churches at home were keeping with a profusion of flowers, Pascua Florida (Flowery Easter). Therefore, what name could be fitter for this country than Florida?

The lamented Dr. John Fiske, to whom Americans owe a great debt for his researches in the history of our country, has clearly shown in his "Discovery of America" that Florida was seen by Spaniards at least twelve years before Ponce de Leon sighted it. The outline of the peninsula is plainly drawn on an old map published in 1502. But, in a time when explorers were most anxious to find gold and pearls, there was not anything of interest to fix attention on this new coast, and it seems to have been forgotten. Thus Ponce de Leon's achievement really was a re-discovery.

Ponce landed not far, it seems, from the site of St. Augustine. But when he essayed to explore the country, he met everywhere fierce resistance.

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The natives were no peaceful islanders, and they defended their soil valiantly. For some time he ranged down the coast, bathing in all the springs he could reach. Alas! no magic virtue was in any. He came out of the waters the same aged and worn figure. At last, disheartened, he bore



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away for Porto Rico. On his homeward way, he touched at islands that were alive with sea-fowl and marine animals. On one his sailors caught one hundred and seventy turtles in a single night. He called the group Tortugas (Turtles).

If one takes passage from Miami, Florida, for Nassau, in the Bahamas, he passes, about sixty

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miles out in the ocean, a lonely little group bearing the name of Bimini. Behold the object of Ponce de Leon's famous quest! But if he had failed in his main purpose, he achieved something noteworthy. He had found, as he believed, another great island, for such he supposed Florida to be. Accordingly, he hastened to Spain, to report his discovery and get the credit of it. His master was delighted and sent him back to America to rule Porto Rico and to conquer and govern Florida.

For some years, however, Ponce de Leon remained quiet. Then the world rang with the fame of Balboa's and Cortes' achievements. The old warrior's soul was roused to take the field once more. He did not doubt that the great unexplored region which he had coasted held within it rich countries, such as those which had been found in Mexico and on the Isthmus of Panama. He would go and conquer his province. Once more, then, — in 1521, — we see him sailing for the continent, this time with an ample force of men, with horses and all that he needed to possess the land. But wherever he went his former experience repeated itself. At every point naked savages fought desperately against the

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mailed warriors of Spain. In one of these encounters he received a wound and was taken on board his ship. His most dreaded enemy, age, had sapped his vital energy, and he slowly sank. The Spaniards gave up the attempted conquest and sailed for home, carrying their wounded leader. He reached Porto Rico only to die. Florida, instead of immortal youth, had given him an earlier grave.

One other disastrous attempt on the Atlantic coast must be mentioned, not because it had any purpose of exploration, but because it resulted in a discovery. In the few years that had elapsed since the coming of the Spaniards into the West Indies, under their cruel exactions the natives were fast dying out. It was necessary to recruit laborers for the mines from some quarter. In 1520 Lucas Vasquez de Ayllon, a high official of Santo Domingo, took two vessels to cruise among the Bahamas on a slave-catching expedition. Easterly gales drove him out of his way, and he brought up on a strange coast. The country was enchanting and the natives friendly. They called the region Chicora. The Spaniards gave the name St. Helena to a headland, and it still clings to an island and the adjacent sound.

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Entering the mouth of a river, probably the Combahee, they called it the Jordan. Thus, in 1520, the seaboard of the future State of South Carolina was first visited by white men.

It would have been well for the kindly natives



ST. HELENA, THE SCENE OF AYLLON'S TREACHERY

if they had known the character of these pale-faced strangers whom they held to be beings from a higher world. They lavished on them their simple hospitality. In return, the Spaniards invited them on board. The confiding savages came without hesitation and explored every part

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of the vessels. When the holds were full of curious sight-seers, at a signal the slave-catchers closed the hatches. Then they sailed away with their mournful freight. But their greed was punished. One vessel was lost. On the other the captives refused food, pined, and mostly died before the end of the voyage.

Retribution was in store for Ayllón. His discovery having been rewarded by his master, Charles V., with the governorship of Chicora, he sailed in 1526 to take possession of his province. Again the natives seemed friendly. But this time they had a purpose. They had learned a lesson from the Spaniards. When the latter had been put completely off their guard, they were invited some miles inland to take part in a great festival. Nearly all went. For three days they were feasted. Then, when they were scattered and sleeping, suddenly their hosts fell upon them savagely and in overwhelming numbers. The most were slaughtered. A few escaped with the dreadful tidings to the vessels. Ayllón, with a handful of survivors, got up sail and returned to Santo Domingo, dejected and ruined by his losses. He made no further attempt to take possession of his province.

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So far as we are informed, no white man saw the shore of South Carolina again for 36 years, when Frenchmen visited and named Port Royal, quite near St. Helena. Their leader, Captain Jean Ribault, knew the story of the Spanish visit and thought that he identified the river Jordan.

Chapter V

THE NATIVE AMERICANS. LAS CASAS, THE
INDIANS' FRIEND

Chapter V

THE NATIVE AMERICANS. LAS CASAS, THE INDIANS' FRIEND

Probable Birthplace of the American Race. — Its Oneness. — Who built the Earth-Mounds. — No Native Civilization in America. — What Sort of People the Inhabitants of the West Indies were. — The Fierce Caribs. — How Indian Slavery began. — Character of the Spanish Colonists. — Atrocious Cruelty towards Indians. — Las Casas comes forward as their Friend. — His Heroic Labors in their Behalf. — What he achieved.

WHO are the people whom the first European visitors found in possession of our country? Indians we call them. But the name, as every one knows, is a mistake, growing out of the error of Columbus, who supposed the land which he had discovered to be the eastern part of India. Therefore the name does not give us any light. Nor have these people any history or legends that will help us in our inquiry. Yet we may take it for an almost certain fact that, at some time in the dim past, the forefathers of our Indians came upon this continent from another.

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Until quite recently the commonly accepted opinion has been that the Indians came from Asia, crossing Behring Strait in canoes, as is frequently done at the present day by natives. Some able writers maintain that the Aleutian Islands are the highest points of a land, now sunk, which once extended from one continent to the other, so that America and Asia were one. Of late, however, scholars have generally inclined to a different opinion as to the origin of the Indians. The study of the earth's crust shows plainly that there once existed a land-connection over the North Atlantic, so that Europe and America formed a single continent. For this reason, along with others, the general opinion seems to be that the forefathers of our Indians came from Europe upon this continent during, if not before, what is called the Great Ice Age, when a vast sheet of ice overspread our continent as far south as the latitude of Philadelphia. This opinion is based on the discovery of human skeletons, along with stone implements and weapons, in strata of gravel which were deposited during the Ice Age. Since this period is placed by geologists at many thousands of years ago, it is no longer a question of vital interest where the original immigrants



RUSHING EAGLE, A MANDAN CHIEF

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came from. Their descendants have been here for countless generations, long enough certainly to develop a race-character of their own. We may therefore speak of them as a distinct people, the *American Race*.¹

The fanciful notion of great, mysterious nations that once peopled this continent, but have disappeared, has given place among scholars to the more reasonable belief that all the existing native peoples of America, from the highest to the lowest, from the Arctic Ocean to Cape Horn, with the possible exception of the Eskimos, belong to one original stock, and that all the structures whose remains are to be found in various regions were erected by the ancestors of tribes now existing. This statement includes the mounds found in the valleys of the Ohio and the Mississippi, and the ruins of massive buildings which are seen in Central America. There does not seem to be any special difficulty in accounting for the mounds. The best opinion is that the earliest were built by tribes which afterwards settled in Mexico and Central America, and the more recent ones by the forefathers of the present Creeks and

¹ See Chapter XIII., Appendix, p. 180, where the theory of an Asiatic origin is stated.

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other tribes. These, at some time in their varied experience, may have seen reason to rear structures of this kind. The lamented Dr. John Fiske truly remarks that, at one period of their history, our forefathers in England built castles; but nobody would think of speaking of a race of castle-builders. Moreover, the age of the mounds has been greatly exaggerated. It has been customary to speak of them as if they belonged to a very remote antiquity. The truth is that, while some are undoubtedly ancient, others certainly were built since the coming of white men to America, for in some have been found articles of European manufacture. That eminent scholar, the late Dr. Brinton, remarks, "The opinion is steadily gaining ground that probably the builders of the Ohio earth-works were the ancestors of the Creeks, Cherokees, and other southern tribes." There is good reason, however, for believing that the builders of some of the older mounds were, in some manner, at least intimately connected with the peoples known in history as the Mexicans and the Mayas. (See pp. 186 and 198.) It is equally certain that the age of the impressive ruins in Central America has been greatly overestimated. There is the best reason for believing

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that these structures were reared by the same race of Mayas who still inhabit Yucatan, and that they were comparatively recent at the time of the Spanish conquest.

The application of reason to the problem will dispel some other fanciful notions that have been commonly held as to the natives of America. The Spanish conquerors and their historians called Indian persons and things by European names, without caring whether or not the names were truly descriptive. The chief of a tribe they called a king; the war-chief of a league of several tribes they called an emperor. It was easy to describe a great communal building, with hundreds of rooms, in which a thousand or more people lodged under one roof, as a palace, and the great common meal, served for all the inmates, as a royal banquet. Besides, such terms would make an imposing impression in Europe. Added to this carelessness was a habit of gross exaggeration. If they met five thousand natives in battle, they were as likely as not to report fifty thousand. Everything their pens touched was hugely magnified and fancifully embellished. And as the Spaniards were the first white men who came in contact with the native Americans, their reports

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not been spoken for many centuries, and that it meant a *milker*. Therefore it connects us with a time when the old race kept large herds of cattle, which were milked by the young women of the tribe. This word is one of the many hundreds which furnish clear proof that the forefathers of the fair-skinned English, Germans, Swedes, Danes, and other European peoples, were of the same race with the forefathers of the dark Hindoos, who spoke Sanskrit; and it becomes evident either that the race which settled in Hindostan migrated from Europe or that the race which peopled Western Europe migrated from Asia.

This comparative study of languages, called Philology, has proved invaluable in tracing the movements and connections of races. It has enabled the scholars of our time to discard many fanciful theories and to get much nearer to the actual truth. Take the Gypsies for an example. For a long time their origin was a puzzle to all the world. It was only known, in a general way, that they came from the East about eight hundred years ago. Hence they were called Egyptians, shortened into Gypsies. Now, by the sure clue of language, scholars have been

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able to trace them to a certain district in India, whence they migrated. To take an example from our own Indians, the same guide, language, shows that the ferocious Apaches, of the burning southwestern plains, are an offshoot of the Athapascans, who roam and hunt over the frozen wilds west of Hudson Bay. How long the two branches of the one stock have been separated we have not any means of knowing, — no doubt, hundreds of years. Examples of this kind show how the continent was peopled, as tribe after tribe wandered ever further and further, in search of more abundant game or water, one often coming on the heels of another and driving it on. In savage life it requires a large area of land to support human existence. Incessant hunting makes game scarce, and a strong tribe drives out a weaker, in order to possess the entire hunting-ground.

Language, then, is a better clue to the origin of a people than outward indications, such as form and color; and it is on the evidence of language that many scholars have ceased to trace our Indians to a supposed birthplace in Asia. The theory of an Asiatic origin has, however, some very strong supporters. (See p. 180.)

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We have spoken of language as a help. It may also be a hindrance. Branches of one family that have been separated for hundreds of years develop so many changes in their speech that new languages arise. French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese are distinct languages to-day ; but all originated in the Latin. Especially rapid is the change in a people's speech where there is not any writing to give it fixedness. Of course, the Indians had not any literature. Besides, their tribes were continually splitting, and the fragments wandering away to take up their abode in some new region. Each of these divisions produced a new language, for the separated fragments would, in time, develop such changes in their speech that, should they come together again after a considerable number of years, they would not be able to understand each other. For example, one would not immediately see that the first syllable of the words *Massachusetts*, *Mississippi*, and *Michigan* is the same. The original prefix, which means *great*, has taken a different sound among different branches of the original Algonquin stock.

Therefore aboriginal America was fruitful soil for the growth of an immense crop of languages.

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Some scholars count not less than twelve hundred different native tongues in North and South America. Others have reduced the number to four hundred. Anybody can see what a great obstacle is this fact in the way of those who would study the native races. Happily, however, Indian life presents certain clearly marked types which do not vary greatly in different fields. Besides, a number of zealous students have devoted themselves to gaining a knowledge of the aborigines by living among them. For example, Mr. Frank H. Cushing, a few years ago, caused himself to be adopted into the Zuñi tribe and made a careful study of that deeply interesting people, throwing a flood of light upon the tribes of the Southwest. The writer is acquainted with a gentleman of the highest standing in his department of knowledge who for years lived among the wild Athapascans of British America, not seeing a white face for three years. The patient labors of such men have gathered stores of valuable information about various tribes; while other students, like the late Dr. Daniel G. Brinton, comparing and classifying these results, have drawn valuable conclusions. In this way we have, within the past few years, gained more

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knowledge of Indian life and ways of thought than all the generations before us.

Let us now bear in mind the general conclusion, that there is and ever has been but one American race, and that all existing remains, the great earth-mounds of our middle West and the sculptured ruins of Mexico and Central America, as well as the Cliff-dwellings of the Southwest, were reared by men of this race in different stages of development. The people who have left these monuments of their industry were as truly "Indians" as were the Pequots and Mohawks.

The natives of the West India Islands were a branch of this one red race which gradually overran all America down to Cape Horn. That they had been established on the islands long before the coming of the Spaniards is probable, for they exhibited, to a remarkable degree, the influence of their surroundings. No doubt they were originally a hardy race of savages, but they had grown soft and indolent. Living on tropical islands, where nature easily furnished sustenance for man, where the rivers and the ocean supplied an abundance of fish, and where there was an absolute lack of large game, they had little of

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the strength and endurance and none of the skill as hunters and ferocity as warriors that marked their kindred on the American continent, especially in its colder regions, where life was maintained by constant struggle, and hunting and war were incessant. Neither had they developed anything like that strangely interesting approach to civilization which had grown up among other kindred peoples, as in Mexico, Yucatan, and Peru. Their religious ideas were of the simplest. They worshiped no demon-gods and therefore offered no human sacrifices. They built no temples, nor other great structures, and had no well-defined organization of society.

A peaceful, mild, inoffensive race, of pleasing countenance and graceful form, needing little exertion to maintain existence, they lived their easy lives in huts of reeds thatched with palm-leaves. They had occasional wars among themselves, and at times they showed remarkable bravery in their resistance to the Spaniards. But their general character was peace-loving. Their first reception of Europeans was, almost in every case, friendly and hospitable; and, even after a bitter experience of the cruelty of the haughty strangers, they showed, on many occasions, an

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extraordinary generosity in sparing and relieving distressed Spaniards whom they might easily have murdered. We have already seen one notable example in the case of Ojeda and his companions, who, when they were at the point of death in the wilds of Cuba, were succored, fed, and tenderly cared for by the inhabitants of a native village. Washington Irving, contrasting instances of this kind with the pitiless barbarity of the Spaniards, truly remarks that the epithet "savages" seems to be often applied to the wrong persons.

One exception to this general character of the islanders was furnished by the Caribs. This was a fierce people which chiefly occupied portions of the mainland of South America, but had extended itself to some of the West India Islands. They were dreaded by the unwarlike natives; whom they were wont to carry off as prisoners and, it was said, eat at their leisure, and detested by the Spaniards, — "not because they ate human flesh," however, says a Spanish soldier and poet, "but because they defended their homes well." This sentence probably furnishes a glimpse of the truth. No offence was greater in the eyes of the conquerors than resistance. To those who sub-

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mitted they granted the right to live, on such terms as they dictated. Those who opposed them were to be exterminated without pity. So declared the official proclamations which they were wont to read aloud — unintelligible, of course, to any but Europeans — before attacking an Indian village. The royal orders which attempted to protect the natives to some extent, expressly excepted the cannibals. They were to be destroyed root and branch. It was enough to declare a tribe cannibals, it mattered not on what hearsay evidence, and it might be attacked and slaughtered without giving account to anybody. We cannot but suspect that the real offence of the Caribs was their indomitable spirit of independence. Cannibals they probably were, as were many other tribes in various parts of America. But their unconquerable resistance to Spanish rule undoubtedly was their unpardonable offence.

Among the peaceful islanders, who at first welcomed them as visitors from a higher world, brought them gifts of food, and were ready to adore them, the Spaniards came; and from that day forth the relations of these two races formed one of the most pitiful pages of all history.

Now we come face to face with that blighting

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institution which, like a great upas-tree, spreads its poisonous influence over all who breathe its air, most over those who imagine that they benefit by it, *Slavery*. It appears early in the history of the white race in America. Columbus, returning from his second voyage, took home to Spain Indian prisoners, who were sold as slaves.¹ But the idea was not original with him. Slavery existed in the world at a period long before all human records. There is abundant mention of it in the Bible and all the earliest books. It was an incident of war. Prisoners were made to serve their captors. But in this primitive aspect it was fast dying out among European nations, when it was revived and took a new lease of life in a most revolting form. War was now made with the express purpose of capturing human beings, enslaving, and selling them like cattle. Sad to say, this new development grew up in connection with the modern movement of exploration to which the world owes so much; and that high-minded man, Prince Henry the Navigator, who paved the way for Columbus and all the great discoverers, was one of its chief promoters. His ships,

¹ See "The World's Discoverers," p. 70.

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which were gradually feeling their way down the African coast, came home laden with black captives, who were sold as slaves in the port of Lisbon.

Such a sale was a novel spectacle, and until its strangeness wore away, it moved deep pity. In a most pathetic passage an early writer describes the woeful scene which he witnessed at the distribution of a ship-load of negroes brought home by one of Prince Henry's captains, — the wretched company, with tears in their eyes, awaiting their fate; then husbands and wives separated, parents and children sundered, women throwing themselves on the ground, with their little ones folded in their arms, "receiving wounds with little pity for their own flesh, so that their offspring might not be torn from them."

Yet he justifies such atrocity — on what ground, think you? In the name of religion! These slaves, he says, "as soon as they had knowledge of our language, readily became Christians;" and this fact he considered to be more than sufficient compensation for all that they had suffered. Of Prince Henry he says that, in receiving "the forty-six souls that fell to his share his principal satisfaction was in the thought of the salvation

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of those souls that otherwise were lost." Here we have the key of the whole wretched business. Men like Prince Henry were not cunning hypocrites, but they were victims of that most baneful delusion, that men can further any good cause by the same means that advance their own selfish ends. They believed that they could serve God and promote the spread of religion by acts that put money in their pockets, at the expense of cruel suffering to their fellow-men. Such was the spirit of the age. A more enlightened idea of religion and a deeper sense of human rights needed to come into the world, ere men could learn the falsity of such reasoning. We must always bear in mind this fact when we read the story of the Spanish conquest. The victors believed that they were missionaries of Christianity. Pope Alexander the Sixth, in dividing the globe between Spain and Portugal, expressly laid upon them the duty of bringing its uncivilized inhabitants within the Church. Therefore each Spanish or Portuguese conqueror went forth with a firm conviction that he was an ambassador of God, offering to the heathen world the unspeakable blessing of Christianity, on the simple condition of submitting to his king and being

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baptized. What mattered the thousands who were slaughtered in their wicked resistance? They simply went, somewhat earlier than in the course of nature, to the Hell to which they were surely doomed. The few hundreds who submitted and were baptized, brands plucked from eternal flames, more than made amends for desolated countries and exterminated peoples.

The theory of Spanish conquest was that, in the opportunity of becoming converted by serving Christian masters, a heathen people received a blessing greater than all that might be taken from them, — their homes, houses, lands, children, liberty — and they really ought to be deeply grateful for being plundered and enslaved on such terms. If they obstinately refused such a gift and remained “infidels,” it was doing God service to put them out of the way. It was a very simple theory and easily put into effect. The Spanish sovereigns tried to modify its working by edicts that would somewhat shield the natives. But every Spaniard in the colonies, from the Governor down to the lowest camp-follower — all bent on enriching themselves at the Indians’ expense — worked the bare theory to the limit; and many ways were found of getting around the law.

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One of these ways originated thus. Columbus, when he governed Hispaniola, tried to check the encroachments of individual Spaniards upon the



INDIANS PUNISHED FOR NOT GOING TO CHURCH

Indians by adopting a system of *repartimientos* (allotments). When lands were granted to a colonist, a certain cacique (chief) and his people were

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assigned to work them. This was not slavery, but serfdom: the people did not belong to the white man, but the right to their labor was attached to his land. A later governor went farther and introduced a method called *encomiendas* by which the people themselves were given, which was virtual slavery. He said to this or that Spaniard, "I give such a band of Indians into your care, to be instructed by you in religion." Of course, this instruction was the merest sham. It gave the Spaniard absolute power over the poor people committed to him. He might take them wherever he pleased, put them to whatever work he listed, do with them whatever he would.

We must remember that, while there were in the colonies a few men of high character, the bulk of the Spaniards were rude, reckless adventurers, who had little scruple about any deed of crime, and to whom the shedding of blood was the most agreeable pastime. Imagine, if you can, the effect of putting an unarmed and defenceless population at the mercy of such desperate villains. It did not require a long time for the latter to discover that it was cheaper to work an Indian to death and replace him than to take care of him. Besides, even many Spaniards who were fair and

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decent in their dealings with white men, treated Indians as if they were noxious beasts. The Governor who succeeded Columbus, Ovando, was a man of high principle — towards white



CHAMPLAIN'S PICTURE OF INDIANS BURNED

men. Towards Indians he was a treacherous, bloody villain. Once he was hospitably received and entertained by a queen, Anacaona, and her people. She was the widow of the famous chief, Caonabo.¹ All the while he suspected that the

¹ See "The World's Discoverers," p. 66.

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Indians were plotting a massacre. He pretended to enjoy looking on at their games. Then he said that he would show them a tournament. Under this pretext, he posted his soldiers. When all was in readiness, and the chiefs were gathered around him in his quarters, he gave the signal. His men rushed in and bound the chiefs. The building was then set on fire, and his hosts were burned alive. Later, Anacaona was hanged.

Is it to be wondered at that the wretched natives, not a robust race, and unaccustomed to toil, such as that of the mines, driven by pitiless task-masters, and scantily fed, perished by thousands? Soon the population of Hispaniola was so diminished that the master race found it necessary to look elsewhere for slaves. Vessels were sent to bring them from other islands. The slightest resistance or the easy charge of cannibalism was sufficient to justify kidnapping. Whole populations were hunted down or seized by treachery, dragged on board the vessels, crowded into stifling holds, and carried away to Hispaniola. Those who did not die on the voyage of sickness or a broken heart soon perished in the exhausting labor of the mines. Continual efforts were neces-

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sary to renew the supply. Forty thousand Lucayans, the peaceful natives of the Bahamas, were transported to Hispaniola, leaving the islands depopulated. The dastardly slave-catching of Ayllon on the coast of what is now South Carolina was a type of deeds that were done wherever Spaniards went. It would be easy to fill a volume with stories of their atrocities. One or two instances will serve our purpose. Once, when the natives had taken arms against their oppressors, some Spaniards hanged up thirteen prisoners, "in honor of our Lord and his twelve apostles," so that their feet barely touched the ground, and then amused themselves by cutting and pricking them with their swords. On another occasion some Indian prisoners were slowly roasted in a sort of wooden cage suspended over a fire. The miserable creatures filled the air with their shrieks. These disturbed the captain, who was taking his afternoon nap in a tent near by. He called impatiently to the subordinate officer to finish them quickly. But the latter would not have his sport spoiled. He gagged his victims and thus still enjoyed the spectacle of their dumb agony.

It is an interesting question, How came the

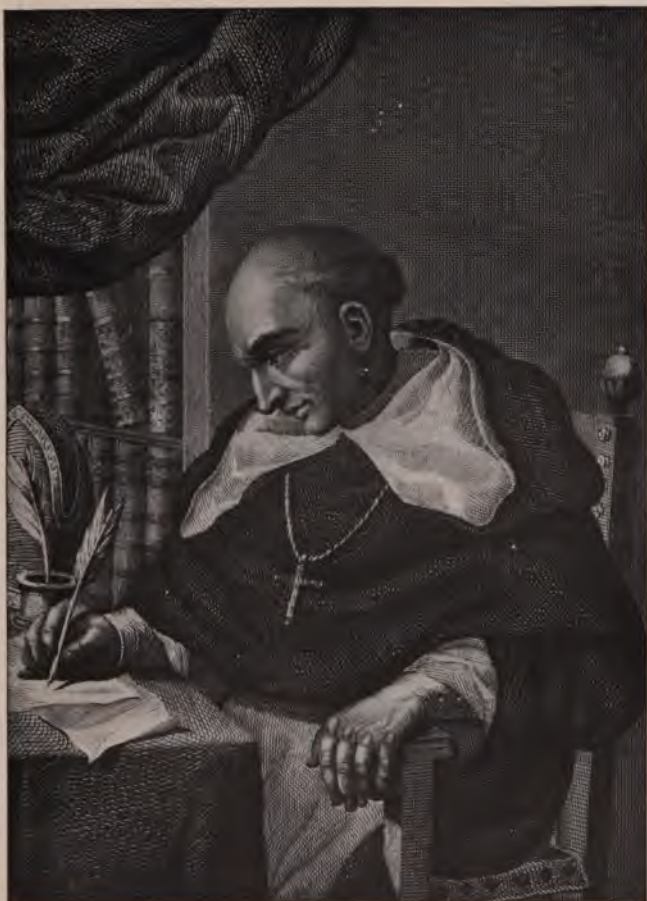
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Spaniards to be the merciless tyrants that they showed themselves in America? Undoubtedly, because they brought to the New World the accumulated hatred of ages against whoever resisted them and refused their religion. Let us remember their national history. In the year 711 the Arab-Moors entered Spain, and at first overran the whole peninsula. Afterwards they were slowly driven southward; but it was not until 1492 that they were finally dispossessed. During all that long period, nearly eight centuries, fighting was almost incessant in Spain. Few industrial arts were developed among the Spaniards. The easiest way to gain the necessities of life was to make raids upon the Moors. Besides, these wars had a marked religious character. The Moors were Mahometans. Therefore a Spaniard felt that in fighting them he was fighting the enemies not only of his country, but of God, doomed to eternal perdition and deserving death at the hands of a faithful Christian. A Moor was, in the eyes of a Spaniard, the most detestable being on the face of the planet; and all the dark races were objects of this antipathy, because of the color of their skin. We must therefore make allowance for the ferocious

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Spaniard of the sixteenth century. He was what eight hundred years of ceaseless struggle for his home and his religion had made him. We cannot excuse, but we can pity him, as the bloody-minded offspring of centuries of violence.

Had the Indians, then, not a single friend? Yes, they had one; and his name deserves to be held in everlasting honor. It was Bartholomew de las Casas. He was a high-born Spaniard, who was a lad of eighteen when Columbus discovered the New World. At the age of twenty-eight he came to Hispaniola with Ovando. He was fair-minded and had a great respect for the personal character of that merciless man, who, he says, was a good governor, but not for Indians. Therefore we may be sure that the shocking atrocities which he relates were not drawn from his imagination, but were actually witnessed by him. He was at all times a serious man, and at the age of thirty-six he entered the priesthood and devoted himself to the service of God. Still, at this time, like other Spaniards, he had no scruples about owning Indian slaves. He and a partner had a large tract of land which was tilled by a batch of Indians who



BARTOLOMÉ DE LAS CASAS

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had been assigned to them, and were quietly growing rich.

His awakening came thus. One day the people of San Domingo were startled by a sermon preached by a Dominican monk, Father Antonio Montesino, in which he denounced the wickedness and cruelty of his countrymen. The rich Spaniards, fattening on the toil of Indians, were infuriated at being told that they were no better than infidels, and stood no more chance of going to Heaven than so many Moors. They indignantly demanded that the monk take back his words. Instead, on the next Sunday, in a church crowded with excited hearers, he declared that he and his brethren would refuse confession to any man who maltreated his Indians or engaged in the slave-trade. His words awakened a new train of ideas in the mind of Las Casas. At first he felt sympathy with the monk, but believed that he had gone too far in his wholesale condemnation of slavery. As he went on thinking, however, he saw that the root of the whole evil lay in the unjust claim of one race to take the fruits of the other race's labor. Immediately he freed his own slaves. From that day forth he devoted all the energies of his brilliant

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mind and all the enthusiasm and eloquence of his ardent nature to fighting the battle of the oppressed Indians.

It would be too long a story to sketch the work of those tireless years. Fourteen times he crossed and re-crossed the Atlantic. He labored in public and in private to arouse in Spain a sentiment favorable to the Indians. The slave-owners sent over a representative to plead their case before the Emperor. Las Casas argued against him and won the Emperor to his side. Next he gained the Pope. As a consequence, edicts were issued mitigating some of the worst evils of slavery. But the feeling of the Spanish colonists was averse to them, and it was hard to get them executed.

Las Casas encountered fearful discouragements. Once, in order to afford an object-lesson of the right way of treating Indians, he founded a little monastery on the Pearl Coast, in South America. A rascally Spaniard, who came and kidnapped a ship-load of natives, made it appear that the monks were implicated in this act. As a consequence, the Indians attacked and burned the monastery, killed some of its inmates, and drove away the rest. Undismayed by this seeming in-

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gratitude, Las Casas continued his labors for the Indians. In Central America was a region called Tuzulutlan. It was mountainous and almost inaccessible, inhabited by a fierce race who offered human sacrifices, and were desperate fighters. The Spaniards called this the "Land of War." They could do nothing with it. Las Casas had announced the principle that the only way to win a people to Christianity is by love, not by the sword. He further said that he would like to try his plan upon the people of Tuzulutlan. The Spanish governor smiled to himself, but readily agreed. He would be glad enough if Las Casas could do anything with these desperate savages. An agreement was drawn up that, if Las Casas would prevail on them to acknowledge the Emperor as their sovereign, no Spaniards but those under his direction would be allowed to go near them. He was to have a free hand to work out his plan.

He began by getting hold of some Indian traders who trafficked in Tuzulutlan. He made friends of them by giving them presents of trinkets and beads, such as the Indians loved. Then he taught them the gospel story in the form of simple verses which he had composed

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and set to native music. He drilled them until they were quite perfect. Then he bade them go and sing these songs to the fierce people of Tuzulutlan. The traders enjoyed their errand. In the evening, when their trafficking was done, they sang the story of God's love to man in these simple couplets, set to plaintive music. A crowd gathered around them. The ferocious idolaters were moved. Then the traders told them how they had been taught these songs by Spaniards who were not like others of their race, but were kind and gentle. Amazement followed. This experience was repeated day after day. It ended by the young chief's accompanying the traders on their return, to visit these wonderful white men. Las Casas won his heart, and he promised submission to the Emperor. Love had conquered where the sword had failed. Now Las Casas was free to carry out his plan. He established himself, with his brethren, in Tuzulutlan. There they labored so wisely and so well that the fierce pagans turned from their human sacrifices to Christianity, and the dark and bloody "Land of War" became a land of peace. It was a triumph of love. Nearly four hundred years have passed since that day, and still the

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world has not learned the lesson that gentleness is mightier than force. But it will learn it in time; else all the travail of the ages has gone for naught.

After some years Las Casas returned to Spain, and there continued his labors in behalf of the Indians. The result was a gradual improvement of their condition. It was a long time before slavery was abolished; but he had set in operation forces that worked steadily in that direction.

It has often been said that Las Casas was so enthusiastic for the Indians that he was unjust to the African race, and advised the importation of negroes to do the work that was killing the natives. This is a partial error. Negroes had been imported into Hispaniola before Las Casas set foot there. But he did consider that the importation of negroes was the smaller evil of the two, since Africans were a hardier race and endured toil that killed Indians; and he so expressed himself. Afterwards he saw that this was a false position, and that to enslave any human being, black, red, or white, is equally a crime. He deplored the degree to which he had sanctioned the African slave-trade, and openly took ground against it.

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During the remainder of a long life he labored untiringly with tongue and pen for human freedom. When he died the world lost one of its truly great men, one of the kind that will be admired more and more as the reign of humanity succeeds the reign of brute force.

Chapter VI

HERNANDO CORTES INVADES MEXICO

Chapter VI

HERNANDO CORTES INVADES MEXICO

How the Spaniards became acquainted with the Coast of Mexico. — The early Career of Cortes. — He sails for Mexico. — The Appalling Magnitude of his Undertaking. — The truth about Mexico and its People. Cortes' Summary Way of making Christians. — His first Battle. — How he Dealt with Discontent among his Men. — He Cunningly makes Allies of the People of Totonac — He burns his Ships.

AFTER Balboa had made his splendid discovery, and the gold of Darien and the pearls of the Pacific had begun to reach Spain, the Spaniards of Cuba turned their eyes wistfully to the neighboring continent, in the hope of profitable adventure. An expedition organized and commanded by Hernandez-de Cordova sailed in 1517. The first land reached proved to be the peninsula of Yucatan. The discoverers were amazed to find houses of stone, and the inhabitants wearing fine cotton clothing and gold ornaments. It was so evident that they were far superior to the Indians of the West India Islands that the Spaniards indulged the

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fancy that they were descendants of some of their own countrymen who, according to tradition, had sailed forth from Spain into the Sea of Darkness and founded seven cities, — a romantic legend of which we shall hear again, and which had an important influence in the movement of Spanish exploration. Instead of



JUAN DE GRIJALVA

the naked West Indian natives, living in huts of reeds, here was a highly advanced people, in regular villages. In short, the Spaniards were now on the soil of a rich and splendid country, such as Columbus had in mind

when he sailed across the ocean seeking Cipango and the empire of the Grand Khan. Everywhere were the signs of a strange union of a high degree of progress with the most degrading superstitions. In a stone temple were hideous female idols. In another was an evidence of serpent-worship in the form of a huge serpent, forty-seven feet long, in

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the act of devouring a lion, all cut in solid stone, while the walls and floor were red with the blood of victims. Cordova continued his cruise along the shore of the Gulf of Campeche. The natives were mostly friendly and readily exchanged their gold ornaments for worthless Spanish trinkets and beads. At one point, however, he found the inhabitants determined to resist his landing. Being short of water, he tried to force one, but encountered fierce opposition and was driven away, with the loss of fifty men and with wounds from which he died after his return to Cuba. This expedition was the first step in the conquest of Mexico.

Cordova's report of his discoveries aroused a fever of excitement in Cuba. The existence of a great and rich region peopled by races higher than any that the Spaniards had yet encountered was revealed. The next year a large expedition sailed, under Juan de Grijalva, to carry on the work of exploration. Avoiding any conflict with the natives, Grijalva passed the point where his predecessor had his fatal fight and reached the Tabasco River. Here the natives were mustered in force, ready to do battle, but eventually showed themselves friendly and brought presents of food,

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woven mats and blankets, and some golden ornaments. When the Spaniards, always hungry for the precious metals, asked for more, the Indians readily gave up all they had, and pointing to the west, exclaimed, "Mexico, Mexico!" This was the first mention in Spanish ears of that rich country.

Grijalva resolved to continue his exploration. Soon the landmarks of the Mexican coast were seen, with mountains in the distance, and, rising above them, the snowy peak of Orizaba. At a convenient place the Spaniards found friendly natives waiting for them on the shore in great numbers. Here came in a singular circumstance which played a most important part in the subjugation of Mexico. The natives had a god named Quetzalcoatl, who represented the Sun. He was said to have been driven away by a dark god and to have sailed away over the ocean, but promising to return with fair companions like himself and re-establish his rule. When Grijalva's ships appeared on the coast, what would the simple natives, who never before had seen ships, naturally think but that this was the fair god Quetzalcoatl, come back over the ocean in huge, winged canoes? They hastened to greet Grijalva

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and his men as beings from a higher world. While a messenger posted off to carry to the chief city the wonderful tidings of the pale-faced strangers' arrival, the simple natives flocked out bringing gifts of food, incense, woven mats, and golden trinkets and statuettes. In the six days of their stay the Spaniards got gold to the value of \$15,000. Never since the discovery of the New World had such a piece of good fortune befallen a party of explorers.

Grijalva resolved to pursue his voyage. First he sent back a caravel to Cuba under Pedro de Alvarado, afterwards renowned in the conquest of Mexico, with the treasure he had obtained and the news of his great discovery. Following the coast, he found temples, altars, hideous idols, and the remains of human sacrifices. In one place repulsive priests, with wild, unshorn locks, were about to offer to the strangers the same worship as to their god. But the Spaniards refused their homage with loathing. Continuing their cruise along the coast, they came to the mouth of the river Tampico, where they were fiercely attacked by a number of natives in canoes, whom they repulsed. It was evident that no more gold was to be had, and Grijalva retraced his course and

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headed for Cuba. His expedition had achieved the second step in the conquest of Mexico. He had ascertained the existence of a great and rich country. He had also explored its coast and had opened friendly intercourse with the natives. But when he returned to Cuba he was amazed to find another expedition already preparing to go out and take advantage of his work. Velasquez was so eager to seize the glittering prize of Mexico that he was unwilling to wait for Grijalva's return. He believed that he had found the right man for the work. Could he have foreseen the future, the last person whom he would have chosen would have been Hernando Cortes.

This extraordinary man was a born adventurer. After a wayward, stormy youth in Spain, at the age of nineteen he sailed for Hispaniola. On his arrival, he was told that he would have no difficulty in obtaining a liberal grant of land. "But I came to get gold, not to till the soil, like a peasant," replied the bold youth. He settled down, however, for some years to the life of a planter, varying its monotony with an occasional duel and with helping to suppress insurrections of the natives, thus learning Indian warfare.

When Velasquez undertook the conquest of

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Cuba, Cortes gladly gave up the routine of a planter's life and sailed with him. Throughout the campaign he distinguished himself by his daring and by free and cordial manners and a lively wit that made him the favorite of the soldiers.

When the conquest of Cuba was finished, he married, received a liberal allotment of Indians as slaves, with a large tract of land, was appointed an *alcalde* (magistrate), and settled down to tilling his fields, working his mines, and raising stock. In a few years' time he had amassed a considerable fortune — "at what cost of Indian lives God alone knows," writes Las Casas.

Then came Alvarado back from the coast of Mexico with the tidings of Grijalva's discoveries and with the treasure he had sent. At once Cortes was eager to leave the tame life he was



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leading; and Velasquez appointed him to the command of the expedition he was preparing. Certainly no better man could have been found for such a purpose. He was quick-witted, daring, and resolute, cool in planning, prompt in decision, and swift in execution. Moreover, he was not troubled with scruples. If a thing was to be done, he asked merely what was the readiest way of doing it, and was equally willing to employ force or fraud, fair means or foul, truth or falsehood. He could be yielding or inexorable, forgiving or pitiless, as best suited his purpose. In short, he had but one principle — always to succeed.

He threw all his energies into the preparations, raised money by mortgaging his property and borrowing from his friends, recruited men, and attended to the smallest details with keen foresight. His popularity, together with the report of enormous riches in Mexico, attracted a number of daring spirits to him, and he soon had a considerable force. His written instructions were to explore the coast carefully, to learn all that he could of the customs and habits of the people, to barter with them, and, above all, *to treat them always with kindness and humanity*, remembering

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that the chief object of Spain was their conversion. He was to invite them to give in their allegiance to the Spanish monarch and to manifest it by presents of gold, pearls, and precious stones. Nothing was said about conquering or colonizing.

When the preparations were still incomplete, Velasquez repented of having given so much power to his aspiring lieutenant and determined to remove Cortés from the command. The latter got wind of his intention and instantly notified his officers to get their men on board at once. Everything was hurried throughout a busy night; and in the morning the citizens of Santiago were astounded to see the squadron lying out in the harbor, with canvas loosed. Velasquez, in a fury, mounted his horse and galloped down to the quay. Cortes entered a boat and came just near enough to shout, "Has your Excellency any orders?" Then, waving his hand in adieu, he rowed back to his ship and hoisted the signal for the fleet to make sail. Having got out of the Governor's reach, Cortes completed his preparations in another harbor and on the 19th of February, 1519, finally put to sea. He had one vessel of one hundred tons, three of seventy or eighty, and several caravels and open brigantines.

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Besides the sailors, there were but five hundred and fifty-three soldiers, with two hundred Indians of the island. This number included only thirty-two crossbowmen and thirteen arquebusiers (musketeers). The rest must rely on swords and lances. There were, however, some small cannon, called falconets; and there were sixteen horses. The cost of these amounted to an almost fabulous sum, so scarce were they, owing to the difficulty of bringing such animals from Europe. His banner bore an embroidered cross, and he undoubtedly considered himself a genuine apostle of Christianity. Strong in this faith, he led his little band to invade a continent of unknown resources.

The story of the conquest of Mexico in its bare reality is strange enough. Think what it was for a force of a few hundred men to march into a great and populous country, whose inhabitants were accustomed to war and swarmed about them by thousands; to fight their way from city to city, seize its capital, defend themselves against overwhelming hosts, and make themselves masters of the country! It was a most audacious undertaking, carried out with equal boldness and skill, and its story is full of incidents of the most

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thrilling interest, when the very existence of the daring adventurer seemed to hang on a thread. But the pictures of a gorgeous civilization, with an emperor, kings, and great nobles ; with lordly palaces and sumptuous feasts, like banquets of Roman epicures ; and with a general type of life very similar to that of Madrid or Vienna, — this was a canvas covered with the bright hues of a Spanish romance. The truth is far plainer.

In old Mexico there was a most interesting people. It had made remarkable progress in social life. Many industrial arts had been highly developed, such as spinning and weaving, working certain metals, and making exquisite articles of feathers. But it was not even a half-civilized people. Without sailing-vessels or any craft larger than canoes ; without wheeled vehicles, or even pack-animals, such as the llamas of Peru ; and without roads, other than narrow paths for foot-passengers, commerce was unborn ; and commerce is the vital breath of civilization. The Aztecs had no printing, such as the Chinese invented centuries ago ; nor even writing, such as the ancient Assyrians had developed thousands of years before the Christian era, but, at the most a very limited method of conveying ideas by rude

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pictures. Not one of the great arts in use among us to-day can be traced to old Mexico as its starting-point. The Aztecs were simply very advanced barbarians. Under the cold light of modern investigation the "empire of the Aztecs" dwindles to a confederacy of tribes; the opulent cities of a gorgeous civilization shrink into primitive towns, larger and richer than these, but of which we can get the best picture from the still existing pueblos of New Mexico; and the gilded "halls of the Montezumas," with twelve hundred rooms in the "palace," fade into great communal houses, such as those which we can still see in Zuñi or Moqui, in which the entire population is sheltered under a single roof.

The first landing of the Spaniards was made on the island of Cozumel. At once Cortes "vexed his righteous soul" in seeing the natives given over to idolatry. He tried to persuade them to become Christians. They refused. Then he took a short road. Marching some of his men into the great temple, he made them tumble the hideous stone images down the steps, and set up an altar where Father Olmedo celebrated mass. The simple natives uttered fearful lamentations when they saw their venerated idols

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overthrown, expecting that they would strike the daring strangers with thunderbolts. But when they saw the sky remain serene, while the poor old gods lay helpless on their faces, they declared themselves Christians. Having effected this quick conversion, with his vessels loaded with provisions contributed by the friendly natives, Cortes sailed on around Cape Catoche. Coasting the Bay of Campeche, the Spaniards stopped next at the Tabasco River. This region was favorably known to the Spaniards as the place where Grijalva had driven such a splendid trade. Some of his men were with Cortes. As the vessels sailed along, they pointed out the various localities, and the Captain-general expected to do some profitable bartering. But the natives seemed more inclined to serve some very hot Tabasco sauce than to traffic with the Spaniards, and they brandished their weapons threateningly. It appears that they had been severely taken to task by other tribes for encouraging these intrusive strangers, and they were determined to repel them.

Cortes was equally resolved to make a landing and march to their town. He put his main force into boats and led it himself while a small party

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landed out of sight and made a circuit to come upon the enemy's rear. The Indians in their canoes bravely grappled Cortes and his men in their boats. But when the latter leaped out into the water, waist-deep, waded ashore, and began to use their arquebuses, the flash and roar terrified them. At the same time the other party came charging on their flank. The defenders were seized with a panic and fled. When the Spaniards came to the town, it was deserted. They found houses, mostly of mud, a few of stone and lime, some provisions, but very little gold.

That night Cortes took up his quarters in the court-yard of the temple, posted sentinels, and took every precaution against surprise. The silence of the place made him suspect that the enemy were rallying for a grand attack. He was right. When he sent out a scouting-party, in the morning, it was fiercely assailed, pushed back, and so hard pressed that he was obliged to hasten out to its support.

It was evident that a great fight was on hand. If the Spaniards lost it, the expedition was defeated at the outset. Cortes was fearless, but he was the reverse of reckless, and he was

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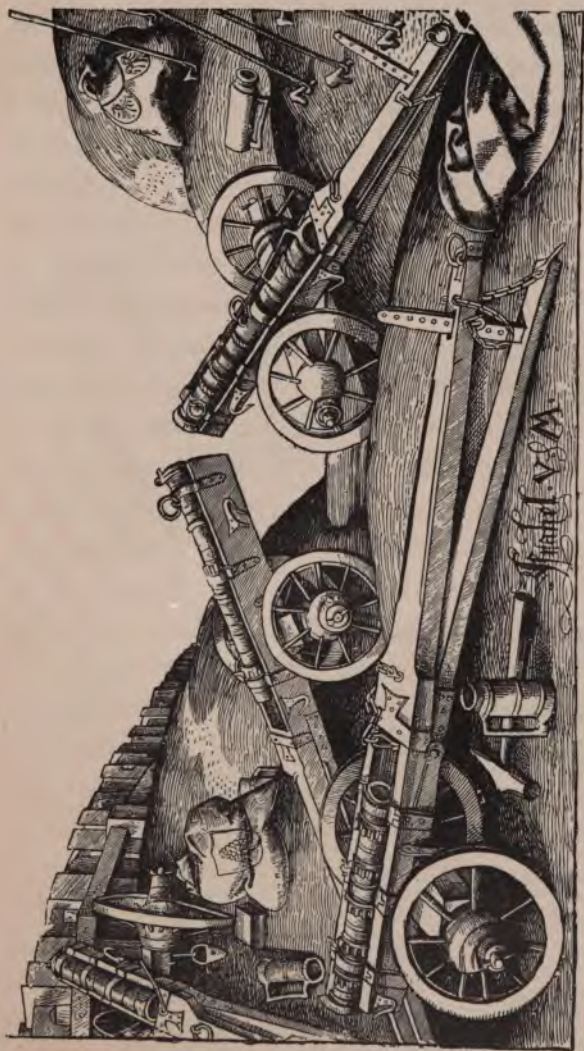
not willing to take needless risks. All that day he kept his men well in hand. Meanwhile he sent the wounded back to the ships, landed his whole force, together with six cannon, got the horses ashore and exercised them after their long confinement, and put the infantry under the command of Diego de Ordaz. The cavalry he would lead in person. Throughout that anxious night, the first of many of its kind, he frequently visited the outposts, to see that no man slept. There is more inspiration in attacking than in defending, and he was determined to march out and meet the enemy in the field, where his horses could be used to advantage, rather than await the enemy's coming.

At early light the gray walls of the heathen temple of Tabasco re-echoed the deep voice of the Spanish priest chanting the mass and saw the little army, with bare heads, fall on its knees, with the clatter of swords and armor. Then it marched out to smite the infidels. Ordaz was to lead the infantry and guns straight toward the enemy. Cortes wished to make a circuit with his horsemen and fall on their flank. The country was low, covered with fields of corn and cacao, cut up by ditches and canals for irrigation.

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But the Spaniards found a narrow causeway, over which they dragged their cannon, those eloquent missionaries of a warlike Christianity.

The enemy swarmed on a broad plain, with their front covered by marshy fields. As the assailants floundered through these they received volleys of arrows and stones, which rattled on their shields and helmets and wounded many. So soon as they reached firm ground, however, the cannon and musketry opened and mowed down the enemy. But they continued to press hard on the pale-faces, coming up again and again to the attack. The fighting had lasted an hour. Meanwhile where were Cortes and his horsemen? There was no sign of them, and the infantry began to be anxious. Suddenly there was confusion in the rear of the enemy, and the hoarse battle-cry, "San Jago and San Pedro!" (St. James and St. Peter) sounded over the field. When the Indians saw the mounted Spaniards rushing upon them, the terror of these fearful monsters — for they believed horse and rider to be one animal — caused a general panic. The cavalry careered through their ranks spearing right and left; at the same time the infantry charged; and the day was won, — at a cost of



CANNON OF CORTES' TIME

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two killed and less than a hundred wounded. The Indians had lost one thousand, says one Spanish writer; thirty thousand, says another; very probably, several hundreds. "This," says Las Casas sarcastically, referring to his countrymen's express orders to convert the natives to Christianity, "was the first preaching of the Gospel by Cortes in New Spain!"

Cortes followed up his victory by sending word to the Tabascans that if they did not submit, he would ride over the land and put every living thing and every man, woman, and child, to the sword. Submission promptly followed this convincing message. The Tabascans came in timid troops with presents of fruit and flowers, with a little gold, and listened meekly to the teaching of the new faith in the place where their great god had once stood. They also presented the conquerors with a number of slaves. One of these, a beautiful young woman named Malintzi, accompanied the Spaniards, who baptized her as Marina, in all their future operations, and became a conspicuous personage as the secretary of Cortes.

All this was only preliminary work. Cortes had his bold eye fixed on the Aztec capital. He

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re-embarked his men and sailed further along the coast.

The next landing was made on the very spot where the modern city of Vera Cruz stands. A neighboring chief came to visit Cortes, bringing a splendid gift including specimens of exquisite feather-work and ornaments of wrought gold. The Spanish commander, in sending a shining gilt helmet as a gift to Montezuma, the Aztec war-chief, intimated that it might be returned filled with gold dust, and informed his visitor that "the Spaniards were troubled with a disease of the heart, for which gold was a specific remedy."

When the Spaniards observed one of the Aztecs setting down in picture-writing a report of his observations for his master's use, Cortes seized the opportunity of making an impression. He ordered out his cavalry and made them perform their evolutions on the beach, to the sound of a trumpet. This exhibition, together with the flash and roar of the cannon, and the sight of the ships swinging at anchor in the bay, did not fail to awe the visitors. A full account was sent to Montezuma, whose most earnest desire thenceforth was to hinder these formidable strangers

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from coming to the chief city. This was the subject of negotiation for some time. The Aztec, in the vain hope of buying him off, sent to the Spaniard a magnificent present. Alas! it only sharpened his appetite, and he repeated his message that he wished to convey in person his master's compliments to Montezuma. The reply was a positive command not to come nearer and to go away as speedily as possible.

These communications needed to be carried all the way back and forth between the coast and the city of Mexico by foot-post. In the meantime the Spaniards were encamped on the shore, enjoying an abundance of vegetables and fruit brought to them by the natives. But they were in the Tierra Caliente, the sickly coast region. The exhalations from stagnant marshes produced fevers, the heat was excessive, and swarms of mosquitoes pestered them day and night. The soldiers became discontented at their inactivity. Something must be done to satisfy them. Cortes undoubtedly had a clear purpose in his mind, but he did not dare to execute it without some excuse. He had already gone far beyond his instructions. For less than this Balboa had lost his life. To march upon the

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city of Mexico, without any warrant but his own will, might cost him his head when the day of accounting should come. Besides, there was a considerable party among his followers who were devoted to Velasquez. In order not to make an open breach with them and provoke a mutiny, he must do things with a discreet show of respect for orders. He pretended to yield to the malcontents and gave orders to prepare to sail for home.

Immediately there was a great outcry. The most of the men were soldiers of fortune, keen for adventure and booty, and they had no idea of leaving the rich country into which they had but peeped, as it were. Besides, the commander's most intimate friends had been zealously at work in stirring up the soldiers to demand the planting of a colony and taking permanent possession of the country. Now they clamored, and the voices of the Velasquez party were drowned in the din. This was what Cortes wanted. It shifted from his shoulders the responsibility of what might be done. He professed to yield to the wish of the majority and to be willing to carry out their determination. A colony having been formed, and magistrates appointed, he

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modestly resigned his office. Of course the magistrates did just what was expected of them. They recalled him and told him that he was chosen to govern them in peace and lead them in war, with one-fifth of all the gold that might be got by traffic or conquest as his individual share. Shortly afterwards he despatched a vessel carrying two envoys directly to Spain, to lay a dutiful letter before their Majesties, thus entirely ignoring the governor who had appointed him. And since nothing would be so potent in securing a pardon for them all as a plenty of gold, he persuaded the officers and soldiers to join with him in giving up their individual shares and sending a magnificent present, besides the usual royal fifth — practically, to bribe the king to overlook rebellion !

In exploring the country the Spaniards came to deserted villages containing temples in which were mutilated corpses of victims sacrificed to the gods. In contrast with these hideous signs was an exquisitely beautiful region, inhabited by a people who showed themselves very hospitable and kindly. Soon the invaders were in the friendly city of Cempoalla, regaled with all the best food it could afford and overwhelmed with gifts, including, as usual, gold ornaments. This

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was the country of Totonac, and Cortes was considering how to make its people his allies against the powerful Aztecs, when an accident favored him. Some strangers appeared whom the natives seemed to look upon with awe. Cortes learned that they were Montezuma's tax-collectors, come to collect tribute. A brilliant idea came to him, and he put it into immediate execution. He stirred up his new friends to refuse the tribute, to seize the collectors, and bind them hand and foot. That night he secretly released them. Of course, they hastened back to their master incensed against the poor people of Totonac and deeply grateful to the friendly Spaniard.

The people of the country were now embroiled with Montezuma and had no choice but to become allies of the strangers. Cortes, in his pious zeal, took advantage of the opportunity of making them Christians, after his summary fashion. He called on them to destroy their idols and worship his God. It was of no use for them to protest that their gods were good enough for them. He stated the case to them plainly: Unless they gave up their idols, he would desert them and leave them to the vengeance of Montezuma. What could they do? While they delib-

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erated Cortes ordered his men to begin the work of destruction. At the sight of the soldiers mounting the steps of the teocalli, or sacred pyramid, the priests howled, and the warriors clashed their arms menacingly. But Cortes promptly checked the disorder by arresting both chiefs and priests, threatening to slaughter the whole population, if a single arrow was shot. Without molestation, fifty soldiers then pulled down the hideous wooden monsters and tumbled them down the steps of the pyramid, amid the groans and wailings of the faithful. The place, gory from human sacrifices, was cleansed and freshly plastered ; an altar was erected ; and the mass was celebrated, an image of the Virgin taking the place of the dethroned deities.

By this time a site for the city had been found. Cortes took his share of the work with the rest ; the Indians lent generous help ; and within a few weeks Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz (the Rich City of the True Cross) was finished.

Apparently the place had no attractions, however, for some of its citizens. Cortes learned, just in time, of a conspiracy to seize one of the vessels, steal away, and return to Cuba. The hanging of two, the chopping off of another's feet,

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and the whipping of several others must surely have convinced every reasonable man that it was a very pleasant way to live in. But the incident gave a hint to Cortes. So long as the vessels were within reach the discontented would try to get away. He suddenly became anxious about the condition of the fleet and ordered a board of survey to examine them. The pilots, who had been bribed, duly reported that the vessels were unseaworthy and worm-eaten. Cortes was deeply concerned, but ordered them scuttled, and down they went. Only one small craft was left. The main body of the force was then absent on an expedition. When it returned the men were furious. Cortes, they said, wished to keep them in this country to be butchered. But what could they do? He had acted under color of the law.

Chapter VII

CORTES TAKES THE CITY OF MEXICO

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Chapter VII

CORTES TAKES THE CITY OF MEXICO

Cortes sets out for the City of Mexico. — Superstitious Terrors of the Natives. — Human Victims are Sacrificed to the Spaniards. — Brave Resistance of the Tlascalans. — They make an Alliance with their Conquerors. — Cortes Defeats the Plot of the People of Cholula to massacre the Spaniards. — The Spaniards enter the City of Mexico. — Cold Reception. — Cortes makes Montezuma Prisoner. — The City rises against the Invaders. — “The Dreadful Night.” — Long and Bloody Siege of the City. — Its Capture. — Cruel Fate of the Aztec Chief, Guatemotzin.

CORTES was now ready to execute his great design of marching on the city of Mexico. Leaving a small garrison at Vera Cruz, he started with about four hundred foot, fifteen horse, and seven cannon, besides thirteen hundred Totonac warriors, and a thousand porters to drag the guns and carry the baggage. He had also forty leading men as hostages and guides. The famous march took the adventurers first through the Tierra Caliente, brilliant with the flowers and

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rich with the fruits of the tropics, and then up the gradual ascent that leads to the high table-land of Mexico. Their route, after the first day or two, must have been the same as that by which the American army of invasion, three hundred and twenty-eight years later, advanced from the modern Vera Cruz to the same destination. At the end of the second day they were at Jalapa, which still retains its Aztec name. A splendid prospect lay before them : on the right the dark, pine-clad Sierra Madre ; to the south the snowy peak of Orizaba ; while behind and below them spread the rich plain to the distant ocean, which many of them might look upon for the last time.

As the road mounted higher and higher the air grew colder, and many of the Indians, unprotected and unaccustomed to any but the warm air of the coast, died on the road. The invaders had now reached the high table-land of Anahuac, seven thousand feet above the sea-level. At a place where they stopped they were received as gods, and fifty men were sacrificed to them. As was mentioned in the preceding chapter, according to Aztec belief there was once a gigantic struggle between the fair god Quetzal-

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coatl, god of light, and the dark god, Tezcatlipoca, the horrible deity to whom the hearts of human victims were the most delightful offering. The dark god won and drove the fair god away. But when he was departing he said that some day he



A PAGE FROM AN AZTEC BOOK

would come back with many friends, to dethrone the cruel god of darkness and rule the land in light. For some reason, the return of Quetzalcoatl was expected about the time that the Spaniards appeared. Can we wonder that these pale strangers, coming on the coast in their ships,

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which the natives took to be winged houses floating on the water, seemed like visitors from another world? This belief also explains Montezuma's indecision. He and his council were perplexed. Were these new-comers indeed, Quetzalcoatl and his heavenly warriors, come to rout the hosts of darkness? Those strange monsters (the horsemen) seemed to make this probable. If so, they must be greeted with every honor. Or were they ordinary men of flesh and blood, who were to be resisted and killed, if possible? This question perplexed the council of each pueblo. We can hardly realize how much the dread of the supernatural, of unearthly powers, worked upon the fears of this superstitious race. No wonder that they fled in terror, and the Spaniards came upon village after village entirely deserted, while the inhabitants peeped from behind distant rocks and walls, shivering with fear as they beheld those frightful monsters which, above, seemed to be men, but went on four legs and rushed like the wind. One modern writer puts the matter quite strongly when he says that the horse overthrew the kingdom of the Aztecs. As the Spaniards marched through their land, what blood-curdling tales must have preceded

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them! In this instance, as human life was supposed to be of all things the most acceptable to the gods, the elders came out and pointed to the ghastly corpses of the fifty victims slain to appease the wrath of the heavenly visitors, and offered cakes steeped in their blood.

When the Spaniards reached the territory of Tlascala, a warlike people that had successfully resisted the yoke of the Aztecs, the same perplexity divided the council. Some were for bowing down to them as gods; others for fighting them as mortals. The latter opinion prevailed, thanks to the valiant chieftain Xicotencal, who said that he would lead the army of Tlascala against them. Right bravely they defended their soil, these dusky warriors — not fifty thousand, nor one hundred and fifty thousand, as Spanish writers have said, but very likely four or five thousand. With their quilted cotton doublets and helmets of stout leather, shields of hide, long bows, arrows tipped with obsidian (a volcanic substance like glass that takes a keen edge), copper-pointed lances, slings, javelins, and heavy wooden swords with knife-like blades of obsidian set into them, they were a formidable host. For two days there was fighting, at times furious. The

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Tlascalans beset one horseman hard, dragged him from the saddle, killed the animal, and almost killed the rider before he was rescued. The horse they cut up and sent in fragments to various villages, to prove that the monsters were vulnerable. The Spaniards lost a few men and carefully buried them out of sight. Undoubtedly many would have fallen but for the constant attempt of the enemy to take prisoners for sacrifice. No doubt they thought that one of these pale, uncanny beings would be more acceptable to their dark god than a hundred dusky victims.

After this repulse the Tlascalans held another council. These strangers, said the wise men, are children of the Sun. While he is in the sky they are invincible. When he is gone, they are powerless. Attack them by night. It was agreed. But meanwhile, to get all the information possible, spies were sent into the Spanish camp, with gifts and honeyed words. Cortes suspected them and had them closely watched. Suddenly they found themselves seized. Some of them confessed. At night-fall Cortes cut off the poor wretches' hands and bade them go tell their countrymen that, by night or day, they would find the Spaniards ready for them. He

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followed close on the heels of the maimed messengers with his horsemen ; and scarcely had they reached their own camp when the Spaniards came careering through it, scattering dismay and death.

After these proofs of the invincibility of the invaders, the Tlascalans conceded that their wisest course was to join them against their ancient enemies, the Aztecs. A treaty was made, and Cortes marched on with a large force of new allies. Here we see another circumstance that contributed greatly to his success — his shrewd policy in making one tribe and another his helpers against the strong Aztec League. This, with the superstition of the natives, explains the wonder of the conquest of Mexico by a handful of men.

The next incident of note occurred at Cholula, a strong pueblo belonging to the Aztec League. With the aid of emissaries from Tenochtitlan (the city of Mexico), the chief men laid a trap for the Spaniards, who were invited into the town with the utmost show of cordiality. But Marina, the young woman who had accompanied the invaders since she was given to them in Yucatan, was an Aztec by birth, and her knowledge of the language enabled her to sur-

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mise the plotting of the Cholulan chiefs from words which she overheard. She hurried to Cortes with the information that the Spaniards were to be massacred in the narrow streets. With the appearance of having no suspicion, he summoned the chiefs, told them of his intention to march on the next day to the capital, and asked for an additional supply of food. This was cheerfully granted. That night, while the Cholulans matured their plans, Cortes planted his little cannon where they could rake the streets. The next morning he invited the chiefs to meet him. They all came, along with those who belonged in the capital city. Then he quietly informed them that they were his prisoners, and that he knew the guilty ones among them. He then separated those who had counseled submission to him from those who had concerted a massacre. At the same time his guns opened, ploughing bloody lanes through the dusky mass assembled in the square. The Spanish horse charged into it, spearing and cutting, and the arquebuses and cross-bows did their deadly work. The Tlascalan allies, who had been encamped outside the town, rushed in and began a general massacre. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, were

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slain, among them the head war-chief. When the slaughter was ended, several of the leading conspirators were burned at the stake. Then the victors marched on.

Now they came in sight of the capital. Says the old soldier, Bernal Diaz, who was one of those who beheld that fair vision, "When we beheld so many cities and towns rising up from the water and that causeway, straight as a level, which went into Mexico, we remained astonished and said to one another that it appeared like the enchanted castles which they tell of in the book of Amadis. Some of our soldiers asked if this that they saw was not a thing in a dream."

A beautiful picture it was indeed that greeted the way-worn Conquistadors, in truth like a vision from dreamland. The fair valley of Mexico, fertile and joyous, spread below them ; in its middle a group of gleaming lakes, bordered with cities and villages ; in the centre of these proud Tenochtitlan (Mexico), enthroned on her lake, with the cypress-crowned hill of Chapultepec rising above it, and on the farther edge of the lake, Tezcuco, another populous city.

For such a vision as this all the explorers had hoped and toiled since Columbus first set foot

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on Guanahami. Truly says Dr. Fiske, "It may well be called the most romantic moment in all history, the moment when European eyes first rested upon that city of wonders. To say that it was like stepping back across the centuries to visit the Nineveh of Sennacherib or hundred-gated Thebes, is but inadequately to depict the situation, for it was a longer step than that." It brought face to face civilized men and men of the Stone Age.

On the 8th of November the Spaniards found themselves on the great avenue leading to the capital. Montezuma came forth to greet them with dignity and courtesy. He had tried every device to keep them away, even to sending them a rich present after they had actually come within sight of the city, but all in vain. Nothing could turn them back, and he bowed to what seemed the will of the gods. The fame of the mysterious strangers, of their conquering march across the country, of the fruitless resistance of the war-like Tlascalans, and the terrible slaughter of the Cholulans,—this had preceded them; and we may be sure that the sixty thousand inhabitants of Mexico were eager to see the irresistible invaders. But no crowd came out across the long



THE CITY OF MEXICO UNDER THE CONQUERORS

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causeway to greet them; and beyond it they marched through silent streets. Montezuma had issued orders that the people should keep themselves within their houses. He meant to indicate that this visit was not welcome and should be quickly terminated. He did not yet realize the matchless audacity of these strangers.

Think what it was for this handful of men to march into that great city. Might it not prove a veritable death-trap? Never was a city better contrived for defence. Mexico stood in a salt lake. Three causeways of solid masonry four or five miles long connected it with the mainland. An approaching enemy might be harassed on both sides throughout their entire length by the Aztecs in canoes. Besides, near the city there were drawbridges which might be hoisted in a moment, cutting off passage. To all the methods of primitive warfare the city was absolutely impregnable. Had not a more advanced race, like the Spaniards, appeared, Tenochtitlan doubtless would have maintained her proud supremacy for ages to come. Indeed, had a fiery warrior been at the head of her councils, and had she defied the invaders, it would have cost them a greater price in toil and blood to

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take the city than they could have afforded to pay. But superstitious awe secured them a peaceful admission which the inhabitants afterwards bitterly rued.

Cortes was as watchful as he was daring. So soon as he and his men were assigned one of the great buildings for their occupation, he posted guards, planted his guns in commanding positions, and gave the strictest orders against a possible surprise. Within the next few days the Spaniards had an opportunity of acquainting themselves with this wonderful city, which was, after Cuzco, the Peruvian capital, the greatest of the New World. It had a peculiar social life of its own, almost like that of civilization. Among its wonders were the great stone houses, with flat roofs, sometimes covered with gardens, each sheltering probably two hundred persons. Then there were two spacious market-places, where the people met to exchange their wares, such as various food-stuffs and chocolate-beans, cloths, tools, weapons, ornaments, and pottery. But most striking of all were the temples, not less than twenty. The greatest, the one devoted to the worship of the war-god, stood within a spacious enclosure surrounded by stone walls,



MONTEZUMA

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on a teocalli, or truncated pyramid. It was approached by stairs so arranged that a religious procession ascending it wound about the pyramid four times. On the summit was a block of jasper, the great sacrificial stone, on which the priests having extended the human victim were wont to lay open his heart with one deep slash, tear it out, and offer it throbbing to the monster whom they worshiped. The whole place reeked with the odor of a slaughter-house. So gruesome was the religion of a people who had advanced very far in social evolution and come very near to the lower stages of civilization.

It soon became apparent to Cortes that something must be done to make the Spaniards secure in remaining within the city. The inhabitants were becoming familiar with the sight of the strangers on their streets and would soon lose their awe. If once these swarming thousands should become aroused to attack them, he and his men would find it a life-and-death struggle. He determined to paralyze them, as it were, by seizing Montezuma, who was both head-chief and high-priest. A pretext was soon offered. A chief near Vera Cruz attacked the Spaniards left there. These beat him off, but lost several



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of their number. The news came to Cortes, and he made it a basis of complaint to Montezuma. At the same time he suggested that, as a sign of his perfect confidence in the visitors, the head-chief should take up his abode in the same building with the Spaniards. Montezuma saw the wily captain's cunning purpose and turned pale under his brown skin, but dared not refuse. Now Cortes was master of the situation, ruling through his prisoner, whom he professed to treat with great respect, but who might not even visit his temple without a strong guard of Spaniards surrounding him. Cortes held the reins with a firm grip. Montezuma had sent for the chief who had attacked the Spaniards at Vera Cruz. When he arrived Cortes burned him at the stake, on the public square, along with several of his friends. At the same time he sent his men around in the city, to the various "dathouses," or armories, collected vast quantities of arrows and javelins, piled them around the stakes, and burned them in the same flames with the unfortunate chiefs.

All these daring encroachments the Mexicans endured patiently, cowed by their superstition. So the winter passed quietly. What dauntless

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men were the Spaniards of that day ! The same year (1520) that saw a handful of them in possession of the Aztec capital, saw another Spanish expedition, under Magellan, break through the barrier that had been believed to extend to the South Pole, enter the Pacific, and sail boldly on in that desperately daring voyage that put the first girdle around the globe.

But there was a limit to the endurance of the Aztecs, and thus it was reached. Tidings came to Cortes that a great Spanish force was on the sea-board. The Governor of Cuba had despatched Panfilo de Narvaez with eighteen ships and twelve hundred men to arrest the rebellious Cortes. He had sent a pigmy to arrest a giant ! What mattered it that Narvaez had almost three men to every one that Cortes could muster ? The stout conqueror left Alvarado, with one-third of his men, to hold the city of Mexico, while with the remainder he hurried to the sea-board. He fell upon Narvaez by surprise, defeated and routed him, allured his army to enroll under his banner by gorgeous pictures of the wealth of Mexico, and actually marched back at the head of the force as whose prisoner he was expected to arrive in Cuba. But when he reached the city on his

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return, he found a state of things that made him tell Alvarado that he was a fool. As to what had happened on this occasion very diverse opinions have been expressed. Some have said that it was the season of the great May festival of the Mexicans; that they obtained permission from Alvarado to hold it; and



DON PEDRO DE ALVARADO

that when the gayety was at its height, suddenly and without provocation this treacherous Harry Hotspur fell upon the gay crowd and slaughtered the merry-makers without ruth.

According to others, Indians never dance

for fun; the May festival was merely a cloak for their deep designs; the dance was really like the ghost-dances of some of our Western tribes, a prelude to war; Alvarado recognized the signs of an approaching storm; and he showed himself a prudent soldier by striking the first blow. However this may have been, it clearly was too late

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for Cortes' diplomatic methods. His hot-headed lieutenant — "Sun-face" the Aztecs called him, on account of his fair face and blond beard — had kindled a flame that came near to consuming the foundations of Spanish rule. After the massacre the Indians had driven the little Spanish garrison within its fortress and laid siege to it. Alvarado had compelled Montezuma to appear and quell the disorder. Then came Cortes on the scene with his augmented force. He found the city full of the signs of war, and they did not abate, but rather grew worse. A profoundly important change had taken place of which he knew nothing. The tribal council, seeing Montezuma still a prisoner, had deposed him and elected his brother to fill his place; for Montezuma was no "emperor," as Cortes thought, but only the war-chief and high-priest. At once the smouldering fires of Aztec resentment burst into a furious flame, for now the people had a leader. The next day they swarmed on the streets and the neighboring pyramids and house-tops and attacked the Spanish quarters with fury. Many of the defenders were slain. Their assailants, undaunted by the havoc of the cannon raking the streets, poured in volleys of burning arrows and set the woodwork on

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fire. Then Cortes bethought him of Montezuma. The wretched captive was made to appear in his gorgeous robes of state on the terraced roof, to command quiet. Alas! he could now neither command nor persuade. He had ceased to be a sacred personage, and while his successor led the attack, he was regarded only as a pitiful renegade, faithless to his people. His appearance was greeted with revilings and a volley of missiles. A heavy stone struck him in the head, and he fell. A few days later he died,—from the wound, said some, but others have hinted, from the timely thrust of a Spanish dagger.

The situation was now so threatening that Cortes, fearing lest his army should be blockaded and starved, resolved on evacuating the city. It was in the night of July the first, memorable in the annals of Mexico as the *Noche Triste* (Dreadful Night), that the little army marched out silently from its quarters, with cannon and horses' hoofs muffled, and, in a rain and intense darkness, tried to steal away unobserved. Alas! hardly had it reached the causeway when the deep boom of the war-drum—which could be heard, it is said, more than fifteen miles—sounded through the night, calling the Indians to arms. At the same

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time the Spaniards could see, by the light of huge bonfires suddenly blazing up on the great teocalli, thousands of dusky warriors swarming to overwhelm them. It was to be a running fight of the worst kind, for the Spaniards would be hemmed in on the narrow causeway and attacked on both sides at once, the enemy having access in their canoes to any point in its entire length. But, worst of all, the causeway was cut by three deep sluices, and the bridges over these had been destroyed by the Indians. To overcome this difficulty, the invaders had brought along a portable bridge.

The retreating army consisted of twelve hundred Spaniards and six thousand Tlascalans. The entire force was divided into three commands. The first was under Juan Velasquez, the second under Cortes, and the rear division under the intrepid Alvarado. The Spaniards had reached the first breach and thrown across the bridge, and many had passed over, when a frightful accident occurred. The frail structure gave way under the weight of the horses and guns and went crashing down into the gulf with its living and struggling burden. Those on the brink could not stop themselves from going over, for

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the whole weight of the dense column behind pushed them on. Over they went in a frenzied, yelling mass, weighed down by their armor and smothered by their own numbers, until the channel was choked with corpses. The survivors floundered across, trampling on the bodies of their comrades. Meanwhile the Indians swarmed by thousands along the causeway in their canoes and attacked the column from end to end, with the ferocity of a hate that had long been smouldering. Velasquez, the leader of the vanguard, had fallen, and Spaniards and Tlascalans strewed the causeway.

When the second sluice was reached, it was found blocked by canoes full of warriors, while the sides of the causeway were lined with others. A desperate fight took place ere the Spaniards could force a passage, and at last the chasm was bridged in the same costly manner as the first—with dead bodies. Alvarado, wounded and on foot, was fighting among the very rearmost, to hold in check the furious, yelling Indians pressing on their heels. When the sluice was reached, he held his ground till the last man had gone over and he alone held the pass, like Horatius of old. The current suddenly swept away the ghastly

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bridge, and he found a sheer gap of eighteen feet yawning between him and his comrades. The dauntless "Sun-face" planted the butt of his lance on the sandy bottom and with a supreme effort, weak from wounds and weighted with his armor as he was, vaulted over. To this day, it is said, the visitor to Mexico is taken to see the spot, which is known as El Salto de Alvarado (Alvarado's Leap).

On the Spaniards struggled until the mainland was reached. Then the Indians drew off from pursuit, and the survivors had a chance to breathe and rest. Daylight dawned on a pitiful remnant, five hundred Spaniards — not one without a wound — and two thousand Tlascalans. Every cannon was lost. The horses had nearly all perished. Not a grain of powder was in condition to be used. Their armor was battered, and their weapons broken. As the tradition runs, the stony-hearted Cortes, looking on the wreck of his army and, it might seem, of his hopes, buried his face in his hands and wept.

Had the Indians followed up their advantage, the exhausted Spaniards would have fallen easy victims, and the conquest of Mexico would have remained to be achieved by some other than

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"stout Cortes." But the victors did a characteristic thing. They hastened to enjoy their triumph. As a war-party of Hurons and Mohawks would have celebrated their success by torturing and burning their prisoners, these more advanced barbarians held a great religious festival in honor of their war-god, who was credited with giving them the victory. From a distance the Spaniards beheld sixty of their comrades dragged to the top of the gruesome teocalli and butchered on the reeking altar. The cannibal feast that followed was easily imagined. The ingrained Aztec habit of seeking to make prisoners, rather than to slay in battle, was all that saved the invading force from annihilation on that dreadful night.

Cortes' discouragement was but momentary. He summoned his courage, rallied his men, and led them into the country to recruit their strength. The news of their disaster spread far and wide, and all Anahuac, full of populous villages, rose to overwhelm them. Would Tlascala remain faithful to its alliance? If not, the invaders' case was hopeless. The question was debated in the Tlascalcan council. As Indians, the Tlascalans would naturally incline to make common cause with their countrymen against the domineering

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to Vera Cruz, thence to hasten with the vessels taken from Narvaez to Hispaniola, the Spanish headquarters in America, for reinforcements to save the cause in Mexico.

The next few months Cortes employed in defeating hostile pueblos and making allies of all who would join him in humbling the pride of Tenochtitlan. By Christmas-eve he found himself at the head of a fine force of Spaniards, newly arrived from Hispaniola, besides his veterans, with horses and cannon, and several thousand native allies. The superstitious awe of the Spaniards, as beings of supposed heavenly origin, had vanished; but the prestige of Cortes as an invincible warrior was firmly established.

On Christmas-day Cortes marched against the Aztec capital. Now began a campaign of which Dr. Fiske has well said that it reminds one of the siege of Jerusalem. Let any one read, in Josephus, the story of that dreadful time, — the unrelenting rigor of the Roman general, Titus, and the desperate valor of the Jews, throwing themselves against the mailed legions, perishing by thousands, and still contesting every inch of ground, while all the horrors of famine prevailed in the doomed city — and he will have a picture

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of the scenes that were enacted around and within the city of Mexico.

Strangely enough, when the Spaniards retreated from it, they left in the city an unexpected ally, which then appeared for the first time on the American continent—the small-pox. It had been brought in by a negro who was one of the force which Cortes took from Narvaez. It ravaged the population, and among its victims was Montezuma's gallant brother, who had led in the expulsion of the invaders. He was succeeded as war-chief by his nephew Guatemotzin, who proved to be a royally brave soul. But the defence suffered a fatal loss at the outset, through treachery. Cortes first marched to Tezcucó, which lay on the border of the lake surrounding Tenochtitlan. It belonged to the Aztec League and was bound to resist him. But the chiefs of the two pueblos had quarreled, and the war-chief of Tezcucó admitted the Spaniards and entertained them. This dastardly treachery broke up the league and gave Cortes a base of operations immediately opposite to Mexico. Undisturbed, he could put together and launch thirteen brigantines which he had built at Tlascala and had brought over the mountains

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in sections, without draught-animals, itself a prodigious achievement.

Four months Cortes spent in deliberate preparation. Then, in April, 1521, he began the regular siege. Now for eighty days there was fierce and bloody fighting. Spanish valor met a desperate resistance. The invading army, divided into three columns, under Alvarado, Olid, and Sandoval, attacked the city across the three causeways, while the brigantines, with a great fleet of Tezucan canoes, under Cortes himself, assailed it on the water, sinking the Mexican canoes in great numbers. The very stars in their course seemed to fight against the doomed city. Early in the siege the fresh water supply was cut off; and hunger began to be felt, since no provisions from the country could reach the besieged. But Guatemotzin would not listen to any proposals for surrender, and his barbarian forces held out with amazing pertinacity against fire-arms and artillery. The Spanish guns shattered the great buildings and ploughed bloody lanes in the ranks of the defenders. The streets became heaped with the dead. More than once the invaders charged into the very heart of the city, but were driven back. Sometimes some of them were captured. Then their

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comrades heard the ominous boom of the war-drum and beheld the sickening spectacle of their wretched countrymen dragged up the long winding staircase to the top of the teocalli.

At last, when the dead lay in heaps, and the canals were choked with the ruins of crumbling buildings, when the temples were burned, and numbers of houses had been destroyed, and their inhabitants, men, women, and children, slaughtered by the fierce native allies of Cortes, the end came. Guatemotzin gave himself up to a party of Spaniards.

"Lead me to your chief," he said. He was conducted to Cortes, who was on a house-top, watching the fighting. "Deal with me as you please," he said. "Despatch me at once." Therewith he touched the dagger in Cortes' belt. But the Conquistador, for the present, was magnanimous enough to treat the fallen leader like the hero that he was. He entertained him and his wife suitably to their rank.

With the surrender of the war-chief all resistance ceased, and the Spaniards marched into a ruined city. Their first work was to cleanse it, to dispose of the dead and clear away the heaps of débris that blocked the highways and choked

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the canals. This done, Cortes turned his attention to securing the supposed treasures of the "Aztec emperor." The Spaniards, with their mistaken ideas of the Mexican government, imagined Guatemotzin to be a monarch possessing "crown jewels" and all the paraphernalia of a European emperor. In vain the brave young chief denied that such things existed. Cortes thought him obstinate, and, to his everlasting shame, tortured him and the chief of the allied pueblo of Tlacopan by putting their feet into boiling oil. Later, Guatemotzin and two other war-chiefs were hanged, on the pretence that they were engaged in inciting their countrymen to rebel. Malintzi, or Marina, found that not less deadly than the sword of the Spaniards was their friendship. Cortes having compelled her to marry one of his officers whom she scarcely knew, whereas she loved him devotedly, the wretched woman left her husband and went away to the home of her childhood, sank into obscurity, and died young.

The great Conquistador himself experienced a reverse of fortune. Superseded in the civil government of Mexico, he went to Spain and was coldly received by his master, the Emperor, Charles the Fifth, who had received many complaints of his

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excessive cruelty. He could scarcely obtain even a hearing. Great titles, enormous wealth, and a bride of high birth could not reconcile him to such treatment. He retired into seclusion and died neglected.

His successor, Mendoza, "the good Governor," ruled Mexico wisely and well. The government set itself against the rapacity and cruelty of individual Spaniards. Zealous priests took up the work of teaching and converting the Indians. Their debasing superstition gave way to the benign spirit of Christianity, and they soon became as passionately Catholic as they formerly had been devoted to the revolting rites of their bloody gods. Only ruins, ancient images, and the collections in museums recall the demon-worshiping, man-eating Mexico which Cortes found. To the honor of Spain be it said, her rule in Mexico was firm and kind. The Indians became thoroughly incorporated into the national life, enjoying the same opportunities of advancement as Spaniards. In the present Republic of Mexico the greatest name has been that of Benito Juarez, the president who upheld the national cause during the French-Austrian usurpation. He was of pure Aztec blood. Porfirio

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Diaz, the gallant soldier who led the army of the republic during the same trying period, and who, as its President, is a model of a strong and wise ruler, is also, in part, a descendant of the ancient race.

Chapter VIII

PANFILO DE NARVAEZ AND CABEZA DE VACA

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"stout Cortes." But the victors did a characteristic thing. They hastened to enjoy their triumph. As a war-party of Hurons and Mohawks would have celebrated their success by torturing and burning their prisoners, these more advanced barbarians held a great religious festival in honor of their war-god, who was credited with giving them the victory. From a distance the Spaniards beheld sixty of their comrades dragged to the top of the gruesome teocalli and butchered on the reeking altar. The cannibal feast that followed was easily imagined. The ingrained Aztec habit of seeking to make prisoners, rather than to slay in battle, was all that saved the invading force from annihilation on that dreadful night.

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the continent from Nova Scotia to Mexico. The tract granted to Narvaez stretched from the southern extremity of the peninsula to the Rio Grande. He made great preparations, and, in 1528, sailed from Spain with more than four hundred horsemen and foot-soldiers. From the first, misfortune attended the expedition. Strong westerly winds drove the vessels out of their track. When land was sighted the pilot assured him that he was near the River of Palms (Rio Grande). In truth he was somewhere east of the Mississippi River. He entered an open bay, probably that of Tampa, Florida. Here he landed three hundred men and forty-five horses and took possession of the country in the name of the Spanish monarch. Sending his vessels away, with orders to meet him in the harbor of Panuco, Mexico, he started inland, undoubtedly expecting to rival Cortes' victorious march to the Aztec capital.

Now began a most disastrous experience. The would-be conquerors of Florida dreamed of finding and overrunning a splendid empire, like Mexico or Peru. So confident were they of this that they actually set out with but two pounds of biscuit and a half-pound of bacon to each man.

Instead of fertile fields and rich mines, the

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Spaniards found interminable forests and gloomy swamps; instead of splendid cities, occasional villages of squalid cabins. Through this wilderness they struggled some hundreds of miles, almost starving. When they came to Indian villages, they outraged the feelings of the natives by destroying and plundering their burial-mounds, which they mistook for idol-temples. Thus they soon had the native population in arms against them. Sometimes they journeyed entire days through solitudes in which they saw no human habitation. At other times they were harassed by unseen enemies. There were tangled swamps, full of fallen trees, to be traversed, and deep rivers to be crossed on rafts, while the horses swam. At one place an incident occurred which is related by the old chronicler in this quaint way: "That night they came to a river so rapid that they durst not cross it on floats, but made a canoe, and John Velasquez, venturing it ahorse-back, was drowned, and his horse, taken out by the Indians, was eaten for supper." The pangs of hunger were soon added to their misery, for the Indian villages afforded, at the best, but a little corn and beans.

Now they had traveled several hundreds of

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miles, losing men and horses by the way. They would have despaired utterly, had they not been cheered by the report of their prisoners that in the country of Apalachee they would find gold and all the things that white men love. Towards Apalachee, then, they struggled on, and at last reached this land of promise, which was situated, most probably, in southwestern Georgia.

Oh, miserable disappointment! Instead of a rich and luxurious city, there was only a rude village of some forty cabins. The inhabitants fled to the woods and the Spaniards took possession without resistance. But they were not allowed to retain it peaceably. The warlike natives were bitterly hostile and hovered around by day and by night, seizing every opportunity to cut off any unwary soldier. At all events, however, there were provisions here, and the Spaniards stayed nearly a month, recruiting their strength while they consumed the Indians' food.

Now it was only a question of getting out of the country. Their prisoners told them that by shaping their course southward towards the sea, they would come, in nine days' journey, to Aute, where they would find plenty of corn and vegetables and fish. Accordingly, they set out, as

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hungry for food as they had once been for gold. It was a frightful march for the starving men. There were deep lagoons and miry morasses through which they must struggle, with water sometimes waist-deep. All the while their way was beset by savages, who seemed, as they flitted like shadows through the forest gloom, to be giants in size, using enormous bows, from which they discharged arrows with such force as to penetrate armor at a distance of two hundred yards. At last Aute was reached. The brave inhabitants set it on fire, and the invaders took possession of the smoking ruins. Happily, they found some corn that had escaped destruction and were able to appease their immediate hunger.

How should they escape from this wretched country? The sea was their one hope. A day's march beyond Aute, which probably was not far from the site of Tallahassee, brought them to a river which gradually opened out into a wide estuary. Imagine the feelings of the wretched band when they smelt the brisk odor of the sea and saw the white-capped waves! We recall how the Greek Ten Thousand, on their famous homeward march, after wearily traversing thousands of miles, when they came in sight of

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the ocean raised the joyful cry "Thalassa! Thalassa!"

Now the rashness of Narvaez in plunging into an unknown wilderness, instead of keeping in touch with his vessels, was evident. There was not a sail in sight. And it was no wonder. The vessels had been directed to meet him in the harbor of Panuco, which he supposed to be near, but which, in reality, was distant many hundreds of miles.

In reading the records of the early adventurers nothing strikes one more than their resourcefulness in meeting all sorts of difficulties. And now it was wonderful to see the ingenuity of these Spanish soldiers. Get away they must in some way. Cuba was out of the question, but by traveling along the coast they might reach the settlements of their countrymen to the westward (in Mexico), which they fancied to be quite near.

When the building of boats was first talked of it was dismissed as impossible. But what cannot ingenuity do, when men are driven to their wits' end? First, one man said that he could make a pair of bellows with deer-skin. Then they could easily burn charcoal. So it would be possible to heat and work iron. Everybody's brain was put

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on the rack to devise ways of doing things. Soon a forge was going, and the men handed in their spurs and stirrups and bridle-bits to be wrought by the smiths into tools. When these had been made, boat-building began in real earnest. The forest rang with the blows of a score of axes, and soon the keels of five long boats had been laid. Now the work grew fast, from day to day. Meanwhile, every two or three days one of the horses was killed and its flesh was served out to the sick and the men who were working. The manes and tails were woven into ropes, while the skins were cured and made into bags for holding water. The men's shirts, cut open and sewed together, furnished sails. The seams of the boats were calked with palmetto fibre, and their bottoms covered with pitch made from pine-knots. All this work was done almost within bowshot of hostile Indians lurking in the swamps and watching so keenly that not less than ten men at different times were killed while gathering shell-fish within sight of the camp.

On September 22, five months from the time they had landed in Florida, the boats were ready. Though they had lost forty men by sickness, besides those whom the Indians had killed,

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there was still a large number, nearly fifty to each boat. Thus laden to within a few inches of their gunwales, with the scantiest supply of provisions and water, the five uncouth craft started out to traverse hundreds of miles, all unknown. They had been built without a single ship-carpenter, and now they were to be navigated without a single sailor.

The awkward landsmen bent to the rude oars, and the ungainly boats bore them from the shore. For a whole week they made their way through inside passages, without once going into the open sea.

Soon a horrible experience befell the wretched voyagers. The water-bags rotted, and for days they were without a drop to moisten their parched throats. Then, in their agony, some of the men drank sea-water. This increased their thirst to such a degree that it crazed them, and four died suffering horribly.

This incident determined the leaders to get out of the endless net-work of creeks and bayous. Out into the open sea they steered. The overloaded boats were buffeted by the waves and came near being swamped. But this change also brought them relief, for they found themselves

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off the mouth of a great river. To their intense joy they found that they could dip up fresh water. When they attempted to cross the mouth of the river, the strong current swept them out to sea, and they could not make land. It is thought that this was the Mississippi, which had been discovered and named Rio de Espiritu Santo by their countryman, Alvarez de Pineda, in 1519. In the darkness the boats were separated, but two of them came together again and continued their voyage.

Now came days of weary struggle, as they worked along the coast in sight of land, living on a daily ration of a half-handful of raw maize. The weather, too, had grown cold and inclement. One evening the wretched voyagers were spent with exhaustion, and many were sinking into unconsciousness. Cabeza de Vaca, the treasurer of the expedition, whose narrative we are following, says of the men in his boat, which had become separated from the other, "Among them all there were not five men on their feet." When dark came, only he and the master were able to do anything, and they divided the night between them. Near the dawn, when the boat was drifting near the shore, her crew huddled

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together, helpless, benumbed, and almost insensible, she fell among breakers. A long roller seized her and swept her up on the beach. The shock aroused the men, and they crawled ashore. Soon they had a fire lighted and some maize parched, while pools of rain-water quenched their thirst. The fire revived their spirits, and they began to bestir themselves. One of the strongest climbed a tree and made out that they were on an island. The Spaniards called it Mal Hado (Ill Luck). It was probably on the coast of Louisiana. Some persons, however, have supposed that it was Galveston Island.

Soon some Indians found them and showed themselves very friendly, supplying their wants with fish and a kind of roots. Provided with food and water, the voyagers determined to continue on their way, though the wind was high and the sea rough. Scarcely had they pushed the boat through the surf, when a big wave struck and swung her around. The next capsized her. Three men were drowned, the rest were thrown up on the beach, more dead than alive. The miserable wretches lost all they had in the world, arms, food, and all else, even their clothing.

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It was November and a cold wind was blowing. Happily, they found embers in the ashes of their fire. They blew them into a flame and huddled around it. There they sat, in their scant wet garments, shivering and emaciated almost to skeletons, when their friends, the Indians, re-appeared. They readily understood the situation and showed the greatest sympathy.

They started to escort the Spaniards to their village. The latter did not doubt that they would be sacrificed to the Indians' gods. They undoubtedly got this idea from their countrymen's experience in Mexico. But even such an end they thought would be better than to perish of cold and hunger where they were. The natives, however, far from being cruel, showed them great kindness by making large fires along the way, so that the exhausted and shivering men could frequently rest and warm themselves. On reaching the village, they found a large cabin with several fires in it awaiting them.

After their arrival the natives began to howl and dance. This lasted throughout the night. The Spaniards huddled about their fires, unable to sleep, fully believing that this rejoicing was

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the prelude to their own slaughter. But when daylight came, and they were again supplied with food, they began to be reassured. To their great joy, a few days later they were joined by a party of their countrymen from the second boat, which had been wrecked at another part of the island.

Meanwhile they wondered what had become of the other three boats. They did not know, and nobody ever has known. The wretched little band whose story we are following were the only known survivors of the imposing force that had set out, six months earlier, to conquer a new empire for Spain. In Cuba nothing was heard of the expedition. The entire force, so far as was known, had disappeared utterly, and in Cuba its fate was a mystery.

Thus matters stood during eight years. Then, one day, some Spaniards on the west coast of Mexico, far away from any white settlement, looking for gold and pearls and slaves, were amazed at seeing a white man approaching them. What was their surprise when they learned that he was Cabeza de Vaca, once a Spanish nobleman and treasurer of Narvaez's expedition! He told a story of vicissitudes that reads more like

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a tale from the Arabian Nights than a record of actual experiences. He was followed by two white companions, Maldonado and Dorantes, and a negro named Estevanico. These four, with one other, of whom we shall hear later, were the only known survivors of this army of conquest.

Let us take up the story as it was afterwards published by Cabeza de Vaca.

The shipwrecked Spaniards whom we have seen gathered in an Indian village on the coast of what is now Texas or Louisiana, considered what they should do. It was decided that they should remain where they were and send four of their number in search of the Spanish settlements, which they supposed to be not far away. Shortly afterwards sickness broke out among them, and they died so rapidly that they were reduced to fifteen. In the meantime the temper of the Indians had changed. Food was scarce among them, and finding it burdensome to feed so many idle men, they broke up the party by sending some to the mainland. Of those who remained on the island all but two escaped and made their way down the coast. The two who did not get away, because of being too ill to

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travel, were Vaca and Lope Oviedo. Unskilled to use any weapons but fire-arms, they could not serve their masters as hunters or fishermen, and so they were made to do the lowest drudgery, such as is commonly done among the Indians by women. Their time was spent chiefly in digging roots which grew under the water. "From this employment," says Cabeza de Vaca, "I had my fingers so worn that, did a straw but touch them, it would draw blood."

He was so near starving that he was very thankful when he had a chance of scraping hides for the Indians. The scrapings served him for food several days. Later on he fared better and was employed by the Indians to trade for them, carrying certain articles which were obtained near the sea to the inland and exchanging them for others which were abundant there. In this way he became acquainted with a considerable part of the coast. The one hope that sustained him was that of escaping to his countrymen. Oviedo, however, was afraid to join him in flight and put him off from year to year. Finally Cabeza de Vaca overcame his timidity, and they started. After crossing four rivers they came to a wide bay. Here they heard from some Indians of three

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countrymen who were at some distance beyond. But the tales which they heard of the Indians' cruelty so disheartened Oviedo that he preferred to go back to his former masters. So he disappears forever from our story. Cabeza de Vaca went on alone, and, two days later, met his three countrymen. They belonged to the party that had escaped from the island six years before.

The four remained quietly where they were, awaiting the time when the Indians would go to gather the fruit of the cactus, or prickly pear, on which they lived entirely for three months of the year. This occasion, the Spaniards thought, would give them an opportunity of escaping. When the time came, the Indians, as it chanced, had a quarrel among themselves and separated the prisoners. Their hope of escape was thwarted for a year, another year of slavery under brutal masters. The next season, having successfully arranged to elude the watchfulness of the Indians, they began their flight. At the first they traveled very rapidly, until they were well beyond the reach of pursuers. Then they tarried with a tribe which treated them kindly. But all the while their hearts were set on reaching their countrymen, and they moved on. The next stage of

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their journey brought them to another friendly tribe, with whom they stayed eight months.

Now came a most extraordinary change in their situation. They had been miserable drudges, existing by the mere tolerance of their masters. Now they suddenly were lifted to the highest position of influence. It happened thus: The Spaniards had scarcely arrived among their new friends, when these, believing them to be beings of a higher race, asked them to cure their sick. They responded by making the sign of the cross over the sufferers and commending them to God. The patients immediately said that all pain had left them, and brought gifts of prickly pears and venison.

The whole camp was at once thrown into a fever of excitement. Every one who had a real or fancied ailment came to the pale-faced strangers, and every one went away believing himself healed. It was a case of "faith cure," pure and simple. The Spaniards used no medicines nor outward remedies, but their mysterious motions and their eyes turned reverently to heaven, with their solemn words in an unknown tongue, appealed to the awe of these simple beings. They did not doubt that the pale strangers had mighty influence with

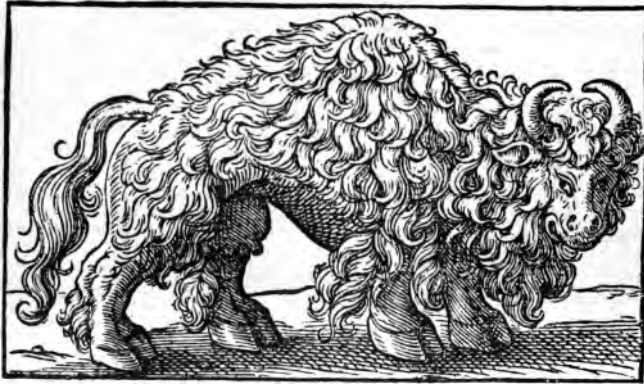
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the gods and could control life and death. We have seen among ourselves many instances of the power of faith over trusting natures, and we know with what superstitious awe the Indians look up to their "medicine-men," who are supposed to be the channels through which the unseen powers exert their will.

Now a bright hope shone before the Spaniards. They saw that the mysterious power which they were supposed to possess would give them the means of carrying out their plans. This greatness had been thrust upon them. They would not refuse it. Their fame spread far and wide. The natives lavished upon them gifts of food. Nothing was too precious to be offered to these children of the Sun. From being helpless fugitives, seeking only to escape with their lives, they had suddenly become divine beings, attended by hundreds of adoring followers. Their journey was a grand triumphal procession through the country. The rumor of their coming drew out all the inhabitants to see them. From far and near the afflicted were brought to be laid at their feet for healing. Once the Indians opposed the Spaniards, who were steadily shaping their course towards the north and west, whereas the natives wished by all means to

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keep them in their country. Within a few days it chanced that several of them died of some epidemic disease. Immediately they ascribed the visitation to the displeasure of the heavenly strangers and implored them to turn away their wrath and not cause any more to die, promising



THE EARLIEST KNOWN PICTURE OF A BUFFALO

that they would do anything they were commanded. From that time forth the Spaniards directed their course as they pleased.

So the strange procession moved on through tribes speaking many different languages, now through arid plains, now through a barren mountain region where many of the native followers died from want. But the best of whatever

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they had was always brought to the divine healers.

In one country which they passed through the strangers were loaded with gifts of buffalo-skins. They called the people the Cow Nation, because they followed the buffalo herds and lived wholly on them. Cabeza's is the earliest written description, and a very queer one it is, of these animals, which at that time roamed the plains in literally countless numbers. "Hunch-backed cows" the Spaniards called them.

Now they came into a region where food was more plentiful and there were fixed habitations and cultivated fields. Probably this was in northern Mexico, in the province of Sonora. Then their course took them towards the Gulf of California. One day, as they traveled down the coast, they saw on an Indian's neck the buckle of a sword-belt. How their hearts leaped with joy and hope! It was the first sign of the nearness of white men that they had seen in eight years. They asked about it and were told that it came from men who had beards like themselves, and had gone south. They soon saw other evidences of the recent presence of Spaniards in abandoned cabins and deserted villages. The inhabitants

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together, helpless, benumbed, and almost insensible, she fell among breakers. A long roller seized her and swept her up on the beach. The shock aroused the men, and they crawled ashore. Soon they had a fire lighted and some maize parched, while pools of rain-water quenched their thirst. The fire revived their spirits, and they began to bestir themselves. One of the strongest climbed a tree and made out that they were on an island. The Spaniards called it Mal Hado (Ill Luck). It was probably on the coast of Louisiana. Some persons, however, have supposed that it was Galveston Island.

Soon some Indians found them and showed themselves very friendly, supplying their wants with fish and a kind of roots. Provided with food and water, the voyagers determined to continue on their way, though the wind was high and the sea rough. Scarcely had they pushed the boat through the surf, when a big wave struck and swung her around. The next capsized her. Three men were drowned, the rest were thrown up on the beach, more dead than alive. The miserable wretches lost all they had in the world, arms, food, and all else, even their clothing.

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It was November and a cold wind was blowing. Happily, they found embers in the ashes of their fire. They blew them into a flame and huddled around it. There they sat, in their scant wet garments, shivering and emaciated almost to skeletons, when their friends, the Indians, re-appeared. They readily understood the situation and showed the greatest sympathy.

They started to escort the Spaniards to their village. The latter did not doubt that they would be sacrificed to the Indians' gods. They undoubtedly got this idea from their countrymen's experience in Mexico. But even such an end they thought would be better than to perish of cold and hunger where they were. The natives, however, far from being cruel, showed them great kindness by making large fires along the way, so that the exhausted and shivering men could frequently rest and warm themselves. On reaching the village, they found a large cabin with several fires in it awaiting them.

After their arrival the natives began to howl and dance. This lasted throughout the night. The Spaniards huddled about their fires, unable to sleep, fully believing that this rejoicing was

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Chapter IX

FRANCISCO VASQUEZ DE CORONADO EXPLORES THE SOUTHWEST OF THE UNITED STATES.

The Legend of the Seven Cities. — Friar Marcos and the Negro Estevanico sent to explore. — The Friar returns and reports favorably. — Preparations for Conquest. — Coronado begins his March. — Enters Arizona. — Capture of the "Seven Cities." — Bitter Disappointment. — The Exploration of Arizona. — The Grand Cañon of the Colorado. — Acoma, the Lofty. — The Enchanted Mesa. — Spanish Atrocities on the Rio Grande. — The Quest of Quivira. — Another Disappointment.

IF Cabeza de Vaca's story seemed like a romance, its consequences were not less remarkable. Who would have imagined that the wanderings of four castaways would lead to the two most important expeditions ever sent out by Spaniards in North America and to the conquest of New Mexico? But so it was.

On his arrival in Mexico, Cabeza de Vaca was hailed by his countrymen as one risen from the dead and quickly furnished with the means of going to Spain. There he told his thrilling story

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and gave a glowing account of the marvels he had seen. One point in especial aroused the keenest interest. He said that he had been told that "there were pearls and great riches on the coast of the South Sea (Pacific Ocean) and very opulent countries there." He did not claim to have visited them. But his story agreed with that of an Indian slave in Mexico who had told his Spanish master that in his boyhood, accompanying his father, who was a trader and traveled far northwards, he visited seven splendid cities, having houses many stories high and entire streets occupied by workers in silver and gold. These two accounts were more easily believed because of an old legend that the Spaniards had been wont to hear. Seven Spanish bishops, it was said, had left their country when it was overrun by the Moors, seven hundred years before the time of Columbus, and had taken ship, along with their people, sailed out into the Sea of Darkness, and settled an island where they built seven cities. When many ships had crossed and recrossed the Atlantic, and still nothing was seen of the Island of Seven Cities, the legend flitted over to the American Continent. Somewhere in its vast interior seven splendid cities

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were imagined to exist. Cabeza de Vaca's report of the story he had heard among the Indians exactly fitted this legend. Besides, the wealth which the Spaniards had found in Mexico and Peru gave probability to it. What was likelier than that, north of the existing Spanish settlements, was a kingdom not less rich than those which Cortes and Pizarro had conquered? The wildest stories became current as to fabulous wealth in those mysterious lands. Numerous cavaliers eagerly craved a commission to explore and subdue this new land of promise. Francisco Vasquez de Coronado was the favored one chosen by Charles the Fifth for the undertaking. He was sent out to Mexico with letters to the Viceroy, Mendoza, directing him to organize the expedition.

Mendoza was glad to co-operate, but thought it prudent to send scouts to see the country and report to him, before incurring the great expense of such an expedition. For this service a certain monk, Friar Marcos, of Nizza, was chosen, and with him was sent as guide a negro, Estevanico, who had been one of Cabeza de Vaca's party, along with a number of Indians.

The friar performed his duty to the best of

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his ability. As he traveled north he noted various things that seemed to indicate that a land of great wealth was near. But his exploration was brought to a sudden close by the death of the negro. The latter had been sent forward from the borders of Cibola (that is, the Buffalo Country), as the Spaniards called this region, to scout and report to him by messengers. The negro, on nearing the first pueblo, was warned by the inhabitants not to come nearer, else he would be killed. But, relying on the methods which he had practised on his tramp with Cabeza de Vaca and the awe which he expected to inspire as a powerful medicine-man, the audacious fellow pushed on, presented himself among the Indians of the pueblo, and made the most outrageous demands. They answered by killing him. One of his attendants, however, escaped and brought the news to the friar.

What should Friar Marcos do? He was not a man of arms, but only a peaceful emissary. He could not endure the thought of turning back just when he was so near his destination. But his terrified followers would go no further and even thought of killing him as the cause of their misfortune. Finally he succeeded in prevailing

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upon two of them to go with him to a point whence he could get a distant view of the "City of Cibola."

There it lay, clearly seen through the pure air, its terraces and flat roofs sharply cutting the sky-line, like the towers and battlements of a walled city. The friar gazed and wondered while his imagination took a great flight. What royal pageants were enacted beneath that stately pile! What treasures awaited the coming of his conquering countrymen!

To-day the ruins of Hawikuh, a few miles from Zuñi, in New Mexico, cover the spot of the friar's vision. And it is matter of curious interest to know that to this day, after three hundred and sixty years, the tradition of the killing of the "black Mexican" — the Zuñi call all people from the South "Mexicans" — survives in that region. This circumstance shows how, among peoples not having the art of writing, memory supplies the lack of written records. We can understand how the Homeric poems and many another treasured piece of the world's literature were told by the hearth or sung by the camp-fire or recited on solemn occasions, hundreds of years before a word of them was put into writing.

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So the friar turned away, fully believing that he had looked upon a splendid city. His mistake need not surprise us. Travelers tell us that the light stone and adobe villages of New Mexico and Arizona, enthroned upon lofty mesas (rock-tables), make a most imposing impression of grandeur. Hawikuh has been estimated to have contained at that time about one thousand inhabitants. Marcos thought it to be larger than the city of Mexico, which had, probably, sixty thousand.

On his homeward way he viewed, he says, the entrance of a fine valley whose inhabitants, he was informed, used gold in making their commonest utensils. He summed up his report by stating that he believed the country whose borders he had reached, more valuable than any that the Spaniards had yet conquered. The effect of his account upon his countrymen may easily be imagined. All New Spain (Mexico) was in a fever of excitement.

At once preparations were begun on a grand scale for an expedition that was to conquer this land of treasure. Francisco Vasquez de Coronado undertook the enterprise at his own expense. This was a common feature of these early ven-



PUEBLO OF HOPI



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fortunate man of his day in getting the appointment. He put all the money he had or could obtain into the venture, — 60,000 ducats, it is said, equivalent to more than \$250,000 of our present currency. Then he started out, deeply in debt, but rich in hope.

Mexico, like the other Spanish colonies, had attracted from the old country a throng of dashing cavaliers who were always keen for adventure. They were very useful if there was an Indian insurrection to be put down, but a turbulent element in time of peace, hanging around the Viceroy's court, brawling, flirting, and making trouble. The Viceroy, Mendoza, could not treat them roughly, for the oldest, proudest blood of Spain was represented among them, and a Spanish colony was a poor place for democratic ideas. But it was a great relief to him to see them departing on this expedition. A brilliant cavalcade they formed, as they passed in review before him on their prancing steeds, superbly caparisoned, with their bright cloaks, glittering armor, and gay pennons fluttering from their lances. What a contrast to Balboa's little band of grim veterans struggling, half-famished, through tropical jungles and scaling the mighty Cordil-

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leran barrier ! The three hundred Spaniards were attended by eight hundred Indians. A thousand spare horses carried their baggage and ammunition ; and large numbers of live sheep and swine were driven along to furnish fresh meat. Six swivel-guns composed the artillery that was to batter the walls of the Seven Cities, and four friars, with Brother Marcos at their head, were to Christianize the conquered natives.

The expedition started from Compostella, on the western coast of Mexico, on the 1st of February, 1540. At the same time two ships, under Pedro de Alarcon, sailed northward to afford assistance to the land force, which was expected to be near the shore for a good part of the way, and to explore the coast, which was still unknown. But, as it turned out, these two branches of the expedition did not at any time come within reach of each other. Alarcon, however, discovered the Colorado River, and ascended it some distance.

The little army marched northward, encountering some difficulty. The Indians were hostile, and the Master of Artillery, in a skirmish with them, received an arrow through the visor of his helmet which pierced his brain. The men had

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begun to realize that it was not a holiday excursion, and disquieting rumors circulated among them that the report of Captain Diaz, who had been sent ahead by the Viceroy to scout, was purposely kept secret by Coronado, because it was not encouraging. There were angry murmurs against Friar Marcos, who, it was said, had grossly exaggerated. On Easter Monday Culiacan was reached. This was the last Spanish post, and the garrison entertained the army of invasion with a sham battle and a hospitable spread. From this point the real hardships of the march would begin. They would soon leave behind the fertile valleys of Mexico and enter a region of thirsty plains, with the scantiest vegetation and with scarcely a sign of animal life.

Coronado seems to have become somewhat disquieted, for he started in advance with fifty horsemen and the priests, leaving the main body to follow more slowly. Let us accompany him and his vanguard. We are most concerned with his movements after he entered the territory of what is now the United States. He found the Indians on the route friendly. They recognized and welcomed Friar Marcos. Coronado entered our territory in the southeast corner of Arizona -

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and passed east of the site of Tombstone. The Gila River or one of its affluents the Spaniards called Rio de las Balsas because, as it was very high, they were compelled to cross it on rafts. Another river they called Rio Frio, because its waters they found cold. Probably this was Salt River. They traveled due north, through what is now the White River Apache Reservation. After they had crossed the Mogollon Mountains, they turned northeast, and a few days later came to a river whose waters were muddy and red. This was the Little Colorado. A few miles further they came within sight of the first of the Seven Cities!

No part of our country so abounds in romantic interest as that into which the Spaniards had now come. Zuñi is the abode of a people who lived there centuries before the coming of Columbus. There they still live, with very little change. The march of progress that has swept away other Indian tribes has spared the lonely little pueblo communities in their adobe terraced houses, surrounded by arid deserts. Their poverty has been their safety. They have no rich lands, no precious mineral deposits, to tempt the greed of white men. So they have been allowed to

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live on in their old way, undisturbed, relics of the Stone Age. Locomotives pass within a few miles, rushing from the Atlantic to the Pacific. But here, in the heart of the American continent, surrounded by our bustling civilization, the ancient world still lives in these solitary villages.

If we should encounter, in some remote nook, a tribe of Indians in ways and habits precisely like those with whom Captain Myles Standish and Captain John Smith had to deal, or a village in Old Mexico just such as those which Cortes found, how deeply we should be interested! How eagerly we should study these people who would reproduce for us the race with which our ancestors came face to face! This is what the Zuñi and Moqui and other Pueblo Indians do. They present us a picture of life in many particulars just such as it was lived before the conquering Spaniards came. Beneath their Roman Catholic religion and their Spanish names, and despite their American shirts and rifles and frocks, little is changed. They still build the same queer community-houses, in one great solid block, piled up story above story, like steps, with ladders to reach them, and opening at the top — the whole village housed in one building

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—a kind of structure evidently adopted as a protection against the marauding Apaches. The women still put up their hair in the same queer rolls drawn over pieces of wood, as the Spaniards describe them. They still gather in the long



RUINS OF CASA GRANDE

hall before the fire, of a winter evening, and spend nearly the whole night in talking over the stories that have come down hundreds of years. In their underground estufas, or khivas, they still practise their mysterious rites, to which none but members of the secret orders are admitted. And they still hold their curious heathen festi-

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vals, of which the famous "snake-dance" is the best known.

How can we affirm so positively that Zuñi was the Cibola of the Spaniards? Because Friar Marcos guided Coronado to the "city" where the negro Estevanico was killed, and the Zuñi traditions preserve the two facts, the killing of the "black Mexican" and the conquest of the pueblos by the Spaniards. The identification is complete.

Thus we can readily picture the strange encounter on which the bright autumn sun looked down. On one side were the way-worn Conquistadors, in their shabby, dusty habiliments and rusty armor, and on their thin, weary steeds, looking more like so many Don Quixotes than the gay cavaliers who had pranced before the Viceroy; on the other, the astonished natives, drawn up, with their rude weapons in hand, gazing in wonder on these terrifying monsters, which they saw for the first time. The world's most advanced civilization was there confronted by men of the Stone Age, which Europe had left behind many thousands of years. The first pueblo, Hakimah, could not turn out more than, perhaps, two hundred men. But the entire male

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population of the whole group had rallied to resist the invaders and was awaiting the Spaniards on the plain below Hakimah, which stood on a steep hill. Coronado sent a peaceful message. They replied with threatening gestures. They had drawn a line, just such as they still draw with corn-meal in their religious ceremonies, and they signified to the invaders that they must not cross it. When the Spaniards advanced to it, they were met with a shower of arrows. The men were eager for the fray, but Coronado still wished to avoid bloodshed. The friars joined their entreaties with those of the men, the word was given, and the horsemen dashed forward. At the sight of these strange, rushing figures the Indians fled in terror. Still the capture of the pueblo was no easy task. As the Spaniards, dismounted, struggled up the steep ascent, they met a shower of heavy stones, hurled with wonderful precision. Several were hurt, and Coronado, who was a conspicuous object in his shining armor, was knocked down and stunned. Within an hour, however, the main body of the building was in the hands of the Spaniards, and the natives, still fighting, had withdrawn to the wings. Before morning they retired, leaving the Span-

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iards in full possession of the pueblo. The next day Coronado sent a message inviting them to come back and live peaceably under the protection of his king. They made no other response than to come and take away their goods and remove them to their stronghold, Thunder Mountain. The other pueblos submitted quietly to the conquerors, and so the "Seven Cities" were won!

But what a conquest! An army had marched five months, at enormous expense, through arid deserts and over rugged mountains, a distance equal to that from New York to Omaha, in order that one-fifth of the force might capture, without losing a man, seven paltry villages inhabited by an inoffensive people, who asked nothing of the world but to be left alone to till their corn and live as their fathers had lived for centuries! True, the famished Spaniards, after their long march, on scant fare, enjoyed the corn and beans and turkeys, the only wealth of the Zuñi. But this could not reconcile them to their cruel disappointment. In truth, they were dupes of their own imaginations, and had chased a phantom as mythical as poor old Ponce de Leon's fabled fountain in Bimini. But they vented their wrath

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in bitter curses on Marcos, and the friar's life would not have been safe, had he not been a sacred personage.

Coronado's main body reached Zuñi at some time in the winter. His entire force was then re-united, except two or three detachments which had been sent off in different directions, and he had under him about two hundred and twenty-five men.

- The Pueblo, or village, Indians among whom the Spaniards had come, were a people wholly distinct from their enemies, the roaming savages of the plains, and greatly superior to them. They consisted of several tribes, scattered from Moqui, in Arizona, on the west, to the upper Pecos River, on the east, and along the Rio Grande, in New Mexico, for a distance of some two hundred miles. They were peaceful tribes, and all lived after the fashion already described, in permanent dwellings, either of stone or of adobe (sun-dried clay), usually perched on a lofty eminence; and they possessed certain rude arts, such as weaving cloths and making pottery. They claimed the people of Old Mexico as their kindred; and by studying the pueblo life of to-day we can probably get a truer idea of the higher stage of

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advancement which Cortes found, than by crediting the romantic exaggerations of the Spanish historians.

The Cibola of the Spaniards' golden dreams was indeed a bitter disappointment. But they still hoped that other regions would prove more satisfying. They heard of a country to the northwest of Zuñi, called Tusayan. Accordingly, Coronado sent off Don Pedro de Tobar to examine it and report. He found a group of pueblos quite similar to those of Zuñi, namely, the Hopi or Moqui villages still existing in northeastern Arizona, and in our time objects of curious interest on account of the famous snake-dance periodically celebrated there. He met with no opposition and came back to report that there was not anything attractive there, but that he had been told of a great river, many days' journey to the west, whose banks were inhabited by a race of giants. To investigate this statement, Coronado dispatched a force under Garcia Lopez de Cardenas. The little band of horsemen traversed the whole width of Arizona from east to west and reached the great river. For the first time the eyes of white men looked on the most stupendous wonder of our continent, the Grand



GRAND CAÑON

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Cañon of the Colorado, in the same month of August, 1540, in which Alarcon, exploring the coast with his vessels, discovered its mouth. They gazed in wonder at the river winding like a thread at the bottom of the enormous gorge whose precipitous side defied them. One daring officer, with two agile men, attempted the descent, but after several hours came back and reported that they had not been able to accomplish more than one-third of the distance. The horsemen made their weary way back to Zuñi empty-handed.

Clearly there was not anything to the westward to reward their exertions, and the Spaniards now looked to the east. Don Hernando de Alvarado was sent in a southeasterly direction, to visit inhabited countries of which the Indians spoke. His first stopping-place was Acoma, called by the Spaniards Acuco. The pueblo occupies one of the most extraordinary situations in the world, on the top of "a perpendicular rock," says an old Spanish chronicler, "so high that a bullet could hardly reach the top." An eminent modern writer, Mr. Bandelier, thus describes it: "Acoma is situated on a rock the shape of which resembles that of a spider. The walls of the

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rock fall perpendicularly down for nearly three hundred feet, while four winding paths lead to the pueblo, none of which has been cut out by human hands. Slight improvements, in the shape of implanted posts and notches for the hands and feet, have been made in a very few places. At the summit is the pueblo, with the great church of adobe and stone, and the churchyard, the soil of which had all been brought up on the backs of the inhabitants. Not a foot of other loose ground can be found on the gigantic cliff; the ten houses stand on the bare rock, whence the view down into the yawning depth is awful. The six hundred inhabitants draw their supply of water, the year round, from the accumulations of rain and snow in two deep natural cisterns. The cultivated fields are fourteen miles away. As evening approaches, as the shadows climb up the rock-walls, and as cliff after cliff is swallowed up in darkness, the visitor's heart is oppressed with the feeling that all intercourse with the outer world is henceforth cut off; for escape from Acoma in the night would be impossible to any one who had not lived there a long time. When the last ray of the sun has taken leave of the lofty sierra, one

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feels absolutely alone, forsaken, helplessly floating in the darkness of night."

To this wild and inaccessible situation the fear of the marauding Apaches drove the Acomans ages ago ; and there their posterity are living to-day, in very much the same fashion as in Coronado's time, but in somewhat diminished numbers, for they are a declining race. Alvarado found the population at the first disposed to defend itself. But, apparently, the fear of the horses produced a change of mind, and peace was made.

An object of very deep interest about three miles from Acoma is the Mesa Encantada (the Enchanted Mesa). It is a most commanding flat-topped rock, rising four hundred feet in a sheer precipice on every side from the surrounding plain. Its native name is Katzimo. At the time when Coronado came the rock of Katzimo was bare and uninhabited, and the Acomans were living in the same pueblo where they now are. Yet, according to their tradition, their forefathers once lived on the top of the rock of Katzimo. A single narrow trail led up the steep rock, in which holes for hands and feet had been pecked. Here they were absolutely safe from their enemies, for a single man might hold an army at

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bay. But an enemy mightier than man attacked them. One day, when the able-bodied men and women were all absent, cultivating their corn-crop in the valley below, there came one of those terrific down-pours which sometimes occur in that dry region. When they would have returned to their abode, in the evening, they found the trail up the cliff blocked by a mass of rock that had fallen, as it frequently does at this day. The superstitious natives regarded this as an intimation from the gods that they were to live there no more. They abandoned the feeble old folk on the top of the mesa to their fate and betook themselves to the rock of Acoma, where they built their present abode.

Years and then centuries passed by. Katzimo stood deserted and unclimbed. Strangers came and gazed at it in wonder, as the Spaniards did, and then went away. The people of Acoma continued to look towards it with superstitious awe, as it frowned over the plain, and to repeat to their children the story of its occupation by their forefathers. But nobody had verified the tale. In 1896, however, a party of Americans, determined to solve the problem of the Enchanted Mesa, succeeded in scaling the rock by means

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of a rope shot from a life-saving mortar. In the next year Mr. F. W. Hodge and a party made the ascent by using the old depressions in the rock, made ages ago for the hands and feet, and wooden ladders for scaling two perpendicular stretches of about thirty feet each. They spent a night on the top and found many bits of pottery on the surface and in the talus of the slope. Thus, though the surface is now treeless and arid, the former occupation is proved, and the Acoman tradition is confirmed.

— Leaving Acoma, Alvarado reached the river Tiguex (Rio Grande) and the villages bearing the same name. Thence he went on still eastward to Cicuye, or Pecos, the most eastern of the walled villages. Then he crossed the mountains to the buffalo plains. Finding a stream flowing to the southeast, probably the Canadian, he followed it a long distance, entered the Pan Handle of Texas, and traversed the upper edge of the Staked Plain. Many of the "hump-backed oxen," as the Spaniards called the buffalo, were seen. From Tiguex he had sent back a messenger to Coronado with a letter praising the villages on the Rio Grande as the best that had yet been found, and recommending that the

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winter quarters for the whole force be established there. Accordingly, the advance guard was removed from Zuñi to that point. There it soon was comfortably housed for the winter.

But, ah, those comfortable quarters ! To provide them, a whole pueblo had been turned out of doors, and, still worse, the poor people had been forbidden to take away anything but their clothes. Thus they were at once deprived of their homes and robbed of their supplies of food, with winter coming on. Such acts are commonly justified in time of war, on the ground of military necessity. But here was no war. The inoffensive inhabitants had received the Spaniards most hospitably. It was a high-handed, heartless procedure, which was sure to arouse angry feeling in the whole region, as it did. Coronado went still further in the same oppressive course. He demanded of the Tiguas a considerable quantity of cotton goods for clothing for his soldiers. They undoubtedly stood in great need of covering, for the weather was bitterly cold, and the Rio Grande was frozen over, so that it could be crossed on the ice, according to the accounts, during four months. This demand was followed up with measures that were even worse. The pueblos

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on both sides of the river were ravaged and plundered, and there were acts of brutal violence the perpetrators of which should have been hanged on the spot.

The unhappy Tiguas rose in a body. They had so far overcome their original dread of the Spaniards' horses that they seized some of these animals. To avert a general uprising, Coronado had no resource but to take the field at once and crush the movement. The war was short and bloody. The Tiguas fought with the valor of desperate men defending their homes and families, and killed several officers and men. But fire-arms gave the invaders an insuperable advantage. Many of the natives were shot, and others were drowned in the icy river. Two pueblos held out stubbornly and were taken only after a long siege. The fall of one was followed by the crowning infamy of the campaign. In storming the pueblo, a number of soldiers had succeeded in climbing to the top of the highest building. From this position they could fire upon a number of the Indians in a court below and called on them to surrender. These yielded, on an express promise of safety from the subaltern officer on the spot, but were afterwards burned in cold blood by order

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of Cardenas, who commanded in the temporary absence of Coronado, and had given the execrable order to take no prisoners. It is not to be wondered at that the Tiguas, after this and other acts of cold-blooded cruelty, fled to the mountains, and, in spite of Coronado's efforts to regain their confidence, did not return to their homes as long as the Spaniards remained in the country.

Long afterwards the Pueblo Indians took a bloody revenge. And if treachery be charged against them, it must not be forgotten that Christian Spaniards had set the example.

— Tigux, the winter-quarters of the Spaniards in 1540-1541, and the scene of these shocking occurrences, seems to have been definitely located between Algodones and Albuquerque.

The Spaniards were fated to chase phantoms. The Cibola myth had been exploded. Another quickly took its place. Alvarado found at Pecos an Indian who belonged to one of the tribes towards the Mississippi. "The Turk," as the Spaniards called him, because he was said to look like one, probably was a Pawnee. The Pueblo Indians and the eastern tribes often met on the plains, whither both went for buffalo-hunting. In some way "the Turk" had become

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separated from his people and found himself among the Pecos Indians. He did not like them and longed to return to his own tribe. But they were hundreds of miles away, and he was alone. The coming of the Spaniards furnished just the opportunity that he wanted. He heard their inquiries for gold and saw them pushing everywhere in search of it. The brilliant idea came to him that he might induce the strangers to visit his country by telling them of gold to be had there, and that he might travel in their company. He drew a fanciful picture of a great and wealthy kingdom and a river in which were fish as large as a horse, and on which his countrymen sailed in big canoes whose prows were of solid gold. At least, so the Spaniards understood him. Immediately he became a most important character in the Spanish camp. He was questioned and consulted, and his alleged stories were repeated and exaggerated. It was a case of gossip, pure and simple; and we have already seen, in the case of Cibola, how much gossip can do. Thus Quivira, the new land of golden dreams, took the place of Cibola, and everybody was keen to start for it as speedily as possible.

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This new hope was surely a great relief to Coronado. So far, the expedition had proved a dismal failure. Financial ruin and the humiliation of returning empty-handed to New Spain stared him in the face. He was eager to start for Quivira and would not listen to his officers, when they suggested the wisdom of sending a scouting party to verify "the Turk's" tale. On April 23, 1541, the march began. The Pecos pueblos were passed, and in nine days more the great buffalo plains were reached.

The Spaniards had now traveled thirty-five days on the plains, with the usual incidents of such a journey. They had encountered herds of countless buffalo and had slaughtered them by hundreds. Their flesh was the only food, for the supplies with which they started had been exhausted; and the excitement of the chase was the only relief from the depressing monotony of the boundless, treeless plains, on which they journeyed day after day, without knowing whither they were going. They had met two types of plains Indians, probably Apaches and Comanches, and these had agreed in telling them that there was nothing to the eastward to reward them, but there were permanent villages about

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forty days' journey to the north. Still, they advised Coronado against going thither. Notwithstanding, he decided to make the attempt, but since the horses were mostly weak from travel and chasing buffaloes, to leave the main body to make its way back to Pecos, while he would push northward with a picked force of twenty-nine men and see what he could find. He took the Turk with him, but in irons.

From all the indications it seems that, at this time, he was somewhere in Oklahoma. It is a singular fact that, about the same date, another Spanish leader, Soto, crossed the Mississippi from the east. As Mr. Bandelier remarks, had Coronado continued his march in an eastern or southeastern direction, these two explorers might have met. Such an encounter, in the heart of the wilderness, entirely without design, would have been even more dramatic than Stanley's finding Livingstone in Central Africa.

While the main force journeyed slowly back to the southeast, Coronado pushed on due north. He crossed a large river, which can have been no other than the Arkansas, and at last reached Quivira.

But again what a fearful disappointment!

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Instead of a people dwelling in stone houses several stories high, they found only a savage tribe living in huts and planting maize, while, during a part of the year, they hunted the buffalo, whose hides furnished their only covering. In fact, Quivira was not even such a town as one of the pueblos, but only a country temporarily occupied by a tribe somewhat more fixed in their habits than their roaming neighbors. It was a fertile region, probably in central or eastern Kansas. But of precious metals there was no trace. The Spaniards were furiously incensed against the Turk. When he was called on to account for the lying tales he had told, he endeavored to throw the blame on the Pueblo Indians by saying that they had engaged him to lure the Spaniards into the plains, in order that they might perish there. According to the Spanish accounts, he put the climax to his crimes by trying to stir up the people of the country against them. They hanged him on the spot. Once more they had been the dupes of their own credulity.

Coronado's homeward march was gloomy and was incessantly harassed by hostile Indians killing men and horses with poisoned arrows. By

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the time that he reached the capital, of the splendid array that he had led forth scarcely a hundred men remained to follow him. The once popular leader was met with reproaches by the Viceroy, who justly censured him for giving up the North, which he had been sent to hold as a Spanish province. He went into retirement and died neglected.

His expedition was a failure, as to occupying the new regions, but a splendid success as an exploration. It traversed New Mexico and Arizona back and forth, besides discovering Oklahoma, Kansas, and Colorado. "Man proposes, but God disposes," says an old proverb. While Coronado's little army plunged into the wilderness, marched thousands of miles, and endured hunger and thirst, it left behind it the wealth it sought. Almost at its starting-point were discovered, a few years later, the enormously rich mines of Zacatecas, from which whole ship-loads of silver were sent to Spain.

Chapter X

HERNANDO DE SOTO SETS FORTH TO CON-
QUER THE KINGDOM OF EL DORADO.



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Chapter X

HERNANDO DE SOTO SETS FORTH TO CON- QUER THE KINGDOM OF EL DORADO.

The Legend of the Gilded Man. — Soto sets out with an Army to seek him in Florida. — Great Difficulty of Learning the Truth about this Expedition. — Some Instances of Romantic Exaggeration. — The Country of Apalachee. — Fertile Altapaha. — Bushels of Pearls. — Brave Tuscaloosa, and his Heroic Stand at Mauvila. — Two Disastrous Fights with the Chickasaws.

WE are now about to sketch the story of a second famous expedition that grew out of Cabeza de Vaca's report of his wanderings.

When he appeared in Spain telling the story of his strange experiences and throwing out hints of enormous wealth to be had for the seeking, there was in general circulation in Europe a fanciful legend of a country so rich in gold that its king was completely gilded. It was said that he was smeared every morning with gum and then thickly sprinkled with powdered gold, which was washed off at night. Strange as it may seem,

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scholars now tell us that this queer story had a certain basis of fact, and that there was in South America a tribe whose chief, on certain solemn religious occasions, was covered with powdered gold, after which he bathed in a lake which was esteemed sacred, this being the customary method of making an offering to the divinity supposed to dwell in the lake. At first this marvelous country was supposed to be in South America, and many an expedition plunged into the wilds of Guiana in search of the Gilded Man (El Dorado) and his golden kingdom. None found him. Then the legend flitted over to North America and connected itself with Cabeza de Vaca's story. It became generally believed that the Gilded Man's kingdom was somewhere in the vast region then called Florida.

One of those who heard Cabeza de Vaca's story with deep interest and connected it with the legend of El Dorado was Hernando de Soto. He was among the most brilliant of cavaliers in those festive days when the old city of Seville kept a sort of perpetual carnival, filled as its streets were with the gorgeous retinues of adventurers who had returned from the New World laden with the spoils of plundered cities. Among these gay

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cavaliers none could vie with Hernando de Soto. He had started out, well-born, but with no possession but his sword, in the retinue of Pedrarias, that governor of Darien who unjustly executed Balboa. His daring commended him to the Governor, and he was allowed to take part in Pizarro's expedition to Peru. He was given

an important command, became famed for his skill and valor, and had part in the seizing of the Inca, Atahualpa, and the taking of Cuzco, the Peruvian capital and the

richest city of the New World. His share of

the booty is stated at a sum equal to more than a million of our money, — and in those days millionaires were as scarce as white blackbirds. He returned to Spain, married a daughter of Pedrarias — the one or the sister of the one who was affianced to Balboa — and set up a princely establishment.



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spent chiefly in Cuba, where there was a ceaseless round of balls and masquerades, bull-fights and tilting-matches, the force finally departed for Florida, where a landing was soon made. The merry-makers were destined to a rude awakening. Within a short time three hundred were encamped on the shore of Tampa Bay, which they called the Bay of Espiritu Santo (Holy Spirit). The first night, as they slept at their ease on the shore, without guards — a soldier like Cortes would never have dreamed of such carelessness — the solemn pine woods suddenly rang with the war-whoop of savages, and a horde of naked forms burst upon them discharging their arrows and using their tomahawks right and left. The terrified invaders ran down the beach and out into the water, clamorously sounding their trumpets for help from the ships. It came, horse and foot, in barges, and drove the assailants back into the woods. But the rude savages had scored the first point in a long game that was to be played to a desperate finish.

After this warning the rest of the army was landed, and precautions against surprise were taken. The Spaniards soon learned why the natives had given them such a greeting. This

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✓ was the harbor where Narvaez had made his landing. He had been hospitably welcomed and had repaid the kindness by cutting off the chief's nose and giving his mother to his dogs to be torn to pieces. The village was deserted, and Soto made it his headquarters while he explored the neighborhood. Then occurred a singular circumstance, the capture of a white man. He was none other than a lonely survivor of Narvaez's expedition. His name was Juan Ortiz. He had come to Florida as a lad, had been taken but spared by the Indians, through the intercession of a chief's daughter, and had since lived with a neighboring tribe. He proved invaluable to the invaders as a guide and interpreter.

The fleet was unloaded, the large vessels sent back to Cuba, and the caravels kept for the service of the army. Then a garrison was left at Tampa, and the expedition set off into the woods in a northeasterly direction. It would be unprofitable to attempt to follow its movements closely. There is not a single authentic history of the march. Several accounts there are indeed; but they are confused as to dates and places, and full of childish stories, such as garrulous old soldiers told over their cups long years afterwards. For



FROM GRAVIER'S "LA SALLE"

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to follow the outline of facts as nearly as we can ascertain it.

The expedition was pursuing nearly the same course as Narvaez had traveled, and its experiences were quite similar to his. Interminable pine forests, deserted villages, dark and dense swamps, where the Indians waylaid the invaders and from behind trees harassed and slew them as they floundered through deep mire and water, — these formed the monotonous routine of the march. No gold, no splendid cities; only an occasional village, whose inhabitants had fled into the swamps, leaving behind a little corn. But if the Spaniards could not find gold, they could get slaves. Whenever possible, they captured some of the natives, put irons on them, and took them along to carry their baggage, pound their corn, and serve them in camp.

The first name that we encounter that sounds familiar is Ocali. Probably the Ocala of to-day is in the same region. An incident that occurred after passing this village gave the Spanish romancers a royal opportunity for the exercise of the imagination. After a battle in which, of course, the mailed Spaniards routed the naked savages, a number of Indians took refuge in a pond. The

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conquerors, unable to reach them, surrounded the pond, waited until they came ashore exhausted, and then captured them. This occurrence is dressed up thus: Nine hundred Indians took to the water, and, all day long, continued to swim around shouting defiance and mounting on each other's shoulders to shoot their arrows. Night came, and not one had surrendered; midnight, and still not one. At ten o'clock the next day, after twenty-four hours in the water, some two hundred came out, stiff and cold. Others followed. The last seven would not give up, but were dragged out unconscious by the Spaniards, who swam in after them, when they had been thirty hours in the water without touching bottom! Then the humane Spaniards exerted themselves to warm and restore them!

The next story is a likelier one. It relates that the enslaved prisoners in the camp rose against their masters and tried to massacre them, and the Spaniards, after crushing the attempt, brought, each one, his slaves to the square and caused them to be hacked to pieces by the halberdiers.

Passing on to the northward, the Spaniards came into a country which they called Osachile. Possibly the Aucilla River preserves this name. Here

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the conquerors succeeded in ambushing some natives to serve them as slaves, in place of those they had slaughtered. These they led along fastened by chains and iron collars to the troopers' belts.

Soto had heard much of the country of Apalachee, and when he reached it, he found it fairly well tilled, with fields of corn, pumpkins, and beans, and defended by a warlike population. The Spaniards duly despoiled them of their provisions and slew them mercilessly, but not without heavy loss. This region seems to have been that of southwestern Georgia, where Narvaez had spent some time. A party sent to the south to seek the ocean found the site of Narvaez's last camp, on the shore of Apalachee Bay, and the skulls of the horses on which he and his men lived while they built their boats. Maldonado was ordered to explore the coast to the west, and came back with a report of having found a magnificent harbor (Pensacola Bay). This was just such a spot as Soto sought, a place suitable for landing emigrants and establishing a colony. Therefore he sent a vessel to Cuba with a report of his complete success and with orders for more men and horses and provisions to meet him in Pensacola in the autumn.

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Still no gold had been found, and the Gilded Man's country seemed as far away as ever. But the credulous Spaniards were sure to be fooled by somebody. Two lads undertook to guide them to a region where they would find gold in abundance, the land of Cofachiqui. Accordingly, they set out to traverse what is now the State of Georgia in a northeasterly direction, not doubting that they would find El Dorado sitting on a solid golden throne. The region of Altamaha (central Georgia) through which they passed, proved to be a pleasant, fruitful country, inhabited by a peaceable and kindly people, who entertained them hospitably in their villages and furnished them generously with food. Soto left his one small cannon as a gift to one of the chiefs. Having witnessed its execution against a tree, the awe-struck natives no doubt revered it as a god. Through this part of the country the chiefs voluntarily furnished guides and porters in great numbers, no doubt gladly speeding the parting guests on their way; and the Spaniards had no need of resorting to their usual cruel methods.

At the last halt which the Spaniards made before reaching their goal they were cunningly imposed upon by a chief. He offered to furnish

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them guides and porters. So many armed warriors assembled to go with them that the Spaniards suspected them of meditating treachery and watched them closely. Nothing happened, however, until Cofachiqui was reached, when, the villagers having mostly fled, and the Spaniards being asleep, their dusky friends suddenly fell upon the inhabitants and glutted their thirst for blood. It was, in fact, a disguised war-party which had cunningly taken advantage of the Spaniards' escort to invade the territory of a tribe of which they stood in great awe.

Under these bloody auspices the gold-hunters made their advent in the region of their dreams. It has been surmised that they were on the west bank of the Savannah River, at a distance of perhaps forty or fifty miles below the site of Augusta. The golden Cofachiqui lay opposite, on the South Carolina shore, where they could see a large village in the woods. This is one of the points where the old accounts are stupendously exaggerated. The Spaniards so confidently expected to find a land of wonders that they saw marvels even in the commonest things. Besides, they must invent some tale that would, at the least, seem to justify their expectations. Therefore we

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have a series of most picturesque legends in the highest style of Spanish romance.

What seems to have really happened was, that the adventurers crossed the river and found a well-to-do people in a fertile region governed by a young woman who received the invaders kindly,



COPPER AND STONE AXES, TAKEN FROM ANCIENT MOUNDS

furnished them liberally with provisions, and gave them some pearls, such as are not infrequently found in certain shell-fish living in fresh-water streams. It is known that the Southern Indians possessed considerable quantities of them. Thousands have been found in the Mounds, usually spoiled by fire or by being drilled. This was all the wealth the Spaniards obtained. Of gold and

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silver there was absolutely none. Therefore, they marched away in chase of some other will-o'-the-wisp.

But this would have been a too commonplace tale to serve as the sequel of their long march. Therefore we are told of a "princess" who received them with royal state, wearing a string of pearls as big as hazel-nuts, gave up to them her own dwelling and stores of corn, and led them into a "temple" where they saw bushels of pearls, and were invited to carry away all that they could. But Soto was not willing to take more than fifty pounds, as a sample!

It is little wonder that Soto was so surfeited with the sight of pearls that he resisted all the entreaties of his officers that he would make a settlement in this Arabian Nights land, and said he would go on in search of a richer country; if he failed to find one, it would be easy enough to come back. But the Spaniards never returned to this land of enchantment. Off they went, driving their herd of hogs, leaving behind — if their story be true — wealth that would have enabled every one of them to live like a lord the rest of his life. They did not, however, abandon the "princess" to consume her days in grieving for the chivalrous

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strangers. They took her along but, sad to relate, as a prisoner, walking under guard with her "attendant ladies." The captive party, happily, managed to escape before long.

We shall not follow the roaming marauders in their westward wanderings, through upper Georgia, across the mountains, and, possibly, into lower Tennessee, always seeking what they would never find. They met their Waterloo in Alabama. Their Wellington was a fine Choctaw chief named Tuscaloosa, which means Black Warrior. A city and a river of Alabama keep alive the memory of this brave defender of his country, who gave the first check to the insolent invaders who for two years had ravaged, maimed, and slain at pleasure.

They were heading for Pensacola, where vessels from Cuba were expected to meet them with reinforcements and supplies, when they came to Tuscaloosa's town, named Mauvila. It is supposed to have stood on the north bank of the Alabama, at a place called Choctaw Bluff, situated about twenty-five miles above its confluence with the Tombigbee, and therefore not very far from the bay and city of Mobile, which perpetuate its name. It was one of the best examples of Indian fortifi-

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cation, being surrounded by a high palisade which had but two narrow entrances, at opposite points, and was chinked and plastered with mud, so that it formed an impervious wall. In it were slits for the defenders to shoot through.

The Spanish vanguard, of one hundred horsemen under Soto, reached this place, along with the chief Tuscaloosa, leaving the main body to come along at its leisure. Almost immediately an affray took place. The Spaniards claim that they were drawn into the place with the express purpose of slaughtering them; that thousands of warriors had been summoned from all the surrounding country; and that they were attacked unexpectedly. This does not look probable, chiefly because there were hundreds of women in the place, and these would certainly have been removed, if such a plan had been entertained. It is certain, too, that the first blow was struck by a Spaniard, and that the first thing done by the Indians was to drive the intruders out of the palisade. This looks as if the trouble began with some aggression of the insolent strangers, and that the inhabitants sought merely to put them out of the town.

The affray instantly grew into a fierce battle.

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The Indians swarmed out of their houses and swept the Spaniards before them through the narrow entrance. Outside, some of these succeeded in reaching and mounting their horses, some cutting the reins in their desperate haste; others were not able to reach theirs, but saw the animals stuck full of arrows. Driven to a distance, the Spaniards formed a line and came back, pressing the Indians before them. But so soon as they came under the palisade, they met a so terrific shower of stones and arrows pelting their helmets and penetrating any exposed part of the body, that they fell back to a distance, only to renew the attempt. For hours the line surged back and forth, the Indians breasting the charge of the mailed and mounted Spaniards and meeting their keen lances with splendid courage. Soto was at the first on foot, but seized a horse and led his men, using his lance with terrible effect. Once, as he leaned forward to give more effect to his thrust, he received an arrow in the exposed portion of the thigh. This hindered him from sitting, and throughout the remainder of the day he rode standing in his stirrups. The Indians, fighting at short range, drove their arrows into the faces of the Spaniards or into exposed parts

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of the body with splendid marksmanship and deadly effect. Carlos Enriquez, a young cavalier who had married Soto's niece, at the end of a charge leaned over his horse's neck to pull out an arrow from the animal's breast. He exposed his throat, and instantly an Indian marksman shot him dead. His brother-in-law, Diego de Soto, eager to avenge his death, leaped from his horse and rushed into the thick of the fray where the fighting was hand-to-hand. An arrow pierced his eye and came out at the back of his neck.

In the meantime, while their comrades, hard pressed, were blowing trumpets to summon help, the main body was jogging along at its leisure. In the afternoon, as it neared the town, those who were riding ahead heard trumpets and saw a dense volume of smoke, for the Spaniards had cut breaches in the mud wall, clambered over, and set fire to the straw roofs. They sent word back to the main column to hasten forward, then spurred on. Thus the main body came up in little squads, and soon the Spaniards were numerous enough to surround the enclosure and cut off escape, while some of their comrades fought within, Soto and others charging between the

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burning houses and plying lance and sword right and left.

The horror of the scene is more easily imagined than described,—the glare, the stifling smoke and fierce heat; the shrieks of hundreds of women roasting in the houses; a band of warriors making their last stand; and the Spanish horsemen charging through and slaughtering them.

At last the end came. The accounts say a solitary warrior, seeing himself left alone, sprang upon the palisade and, finding escape cut off, twisted off his bow-string and hanged himself to a limb. "If not true, 't is well invented."

The conquerors held the smoking ruins. But what a victory! Truly might Soto have exclaimed, like Hannibal after Cannae, "Another such victory, and I am ruined!" Eighty-two Spaniards lay dead. Numbers of horses, so precious to the army, had been killed. And so many of the men were wounded that the one surgeon could not give them attention. All the ointments and salves, all the lint and linen, and almost all the provisions had been consumed in the fire. The force was so shattered that Soto was compelled to remain on the spot three weeks,

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before it could move. Of the Indians the slaughter was frightful. Eleven thousand were slain, say the Spanish accounts, but undoubtedly with even more than their habitual exaggeration.

But the savages really were the victors, as Soto's next move shows. Though he had come so near to his destination — within a few days' journey of Pensacola — he turned back and marched north again. His failure dates from that disastrous day. It was the beginning of the end. Had he pushed on to Pensacola, met his supply-ships, recruited his army, and established a base of operations, he might have made a fresh start and effected a lodgment in the country. But he marched inland to his ruin. No doubt he turned away in the hope of making some discovery or achieving some conquest that would retrieve his disaster. In any case, it was the battle of Mauvila that upset all his plans and led to the defeat of his expedition. When we honor the memory of brave defenders of their country enshrined in history, let us not forget the valiant Choctaw chief, Tuscaloosa, and his warriors.

Marching northwest, the Spaniards entered the bounds of the present State of Mississippi.

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They passed through a pleasant flat country, abounding in provisions, without encountering any more serious hindrance than constant annoyance from the Indians, and finally reached a very agreeable village, which is supposed to have been situated on the left bank of the Yazoo River, probably not far from the present Yazoo City. This was in the Chickasaw country, and the Spaniards called the village by that name. The inhabitants had fled, leaving their crops ungathered in the fields. It was now the first week in December, and Soto determined to winter there. Accordingly, the army made itself comfortable, and there it remained enjoying the houses and provisions. The men had little to do but to hunt rabbits and stray Indians, always in the hope of finding some one who could tell them where to find gold. All was going well, and the horses had grown fat with idleness and a plenty of corn, when, one night towards the end of January, as a fierce north wind was blowing and the men were sleeping in their cozy quarters, suddenly the war-whoop resounded on every side at once, and at the same time the roofs over their heads burst into a blaze. In an instant or two the whole camp was in a roaring flame.

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Through the carelessness of the guard, the wily savages had come near unseen and had poured in a volley of arrows with burning wisps attached which quickly ignited the thatched roofs. The Spaniards sprang to arms, the most of them in their shirts, and, amid the smoke and confusion, made the best fight they could. It was short and sharp. Soto, in his haste, had leaped on his horse without looking to the girth. As he rose in his right stirrup to give force to a thrust, the saddle turned, and he pitched forward on his head. The enemy surrounded him, and he narrowly escaped being killed on the spot. But his men dragged him out, and he soon was in the saddle again. The Spaniards rallied and drew together into a body, and the Indians disappeared as suddenly as they had come, leaving forty of the invaders and fifty horses dead, many of the latter burned where they stood, fastened with chain halters.

The condition of the Spaniards was now more deplorable even than after Mauvila. The larger part of their clothing, arms, and saddles had been consumed, with all their provisions. Almost the whole herd of hogs was roasted. And they were houseless in mid-winter. Happily for them,

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the Chickasaws did not attack again, and they had an opportunity to fit up a rude forge, made of gun-barrels, with bellows of bear-skin, and to repair somewhat their losses in accoutrements. But as to clothing, they were half-naked, and they were fain to cover themselves with straw mats. They spent the remainder of a cheerless winter in an open camp, hunting and slaying Indians by day, and harassed by them every night. With the first days of spring they marched out, glad enough to leave the Chickasaw country. Once more they turned their backs on the ocean and plunged into the wilderness. Left to themselves, the majority would quickly have abandoned the country they had learned to execrate. But Soto was bent on plucking victory from the jaws of disaster, and his iron will dominated all.

They had, however, still another encounter with the Chickasaws. The Alibamo branch of this great tribe had a stronghold which lay directly in the path of the column, situated, according to Indian tradition, on the Yazoo River, in Tallahatchie County. A great force of Indians had gathered there, the most formidable in appearance that the Spaniards had

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yet encountered. Terrible were the braves in war-paint and feathers, with their bodies striped in various colors and circles of vermilion around their eyes, giving them a truly devilish look. These fierce savages were emboldened by their recent success, and, on the other side, the Spaniards were full of bitter resentment.

The fight was opened by an advance of the assailants on foot in three columns, one against each entrance of the stockade. The Indians, in their over-confidence, made the mistake of coming outside and meeting the enemy in the open. When they were driven back, the narrow entrance became blocked. Those who could not pass through were caught between the wall and the advancing line of steel. At this moment Soto led a charge of horsemen from one side, and Vasconselas, the commander of the Portuguese troop, from the other, cutting their way through the crowded and confused savages. It was a regular slaughter. Those who escaped made their way through the rear entrance of the fort, crossed the river, and again defied the enemy. While the infantry took the stockade and put to the sword all whom they could catch, Soto found a ford, led the cavalry across the

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river, charged and routed the enemy, and pursued them until night.

The victory was complete. Two thousand Indians, the conquerors claim, were slain. But their own loss was severe.

Chapter XI

DEATH OF HERNANDO DE SOTO



Chapter XI

DEATH OF HERNANDO DE SOTO

The Great River. — Crossing it. — Rumors of Coronado. — Plans for a Colony on the Mississippi. — Death of Soto. — His romantic Burial. — March towards Mexico. — Moscoso's Cruelty. — Return to the Great River. — Flight down it in Boats. — Mexico reached.

THE next notable experience of the Spaniards was in coming upon a river so wide that "if a man stood still on the other side, it could not be determined whether he were a man or not." Little did they imagine, as they stood looking on that mighty stream pouring its turbid flood toward the ocean, that their one title to fame, after their bloody deeds should be forgotten, would be the fact that they first crossed the Mississippi. Twenty-two years earlier their countryman, Alvarez de Pineda, had entered its mouth. They were the first white men who reached the Mississippi, or the Great River (Rio Grande), as they called it, by land.

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Soto purposed crossing, for of course he had been told of a rich country abounding in gold beyond it. But there was not any point suitable for that purpose within sight, for they were at the Chickasaw Bluffs. Four days they followed its course before they came to a fit place. Then they set to work with their usual energy to build boats. Three weeks were consumed in this work. Then four boats were finished. The crossing was begun some hours before daylight, so as to avoid being attacked while in confusion, and it was finished shortly after sunrise.

Now the invaders were in the land of Arkansas, certainly the fifth, probably the sixth or seventh of the States of the present Union whose soil these tireless wanderers had touched. We shall not follow their roamings. Let it suffice to say that they traveled far enough westward, probably, to come within the present Indian Territory, and then, hearing that the most populous regions lay to the south, they turned towards the ocean. They learned that the country to the north and west consisted of bare plains, on which were countless herds of cattle (buffalo), and that, at that very time, a band of their countrymen were wandering over these plains. Rumors of Cor-

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onado's march had traveled eastward. At the time that Soto turned south, a distance estimated at not more than six hundred miles separated the two adventurers, so nearly had they come together, after starting from opposite sides of the continent. Had the two bands encountered each other, what a meeting that would have been!

It would be unprofitable to follow the weary wanderings of the Spaniards. Autumn found them in a well-provisioned village on the Red River or one of its affluents, within the present State of Louisiana. Here they passed the most comfortable and restful winter they had experienced since their landing. In the early spring Soto, to the great joy of his men, turned back towards the Great River, following the course of the Red River. His plan was to establish himself on the banks of the Mississippi; there to build brigantines and send them down the stream, into and across the Gulf, to Cuba; and thence to draw fresh supplies and men for his colony, which was to be the centre of Spanish influence in all the region that he had traversed. Some of the men went down the Red River in boats, while the rest followed its shores; and in due time the Great River was reached.

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Soto's plan of a colony on the Mississippi was worthy of a great and bold genius. It was revived, one hundred and fifty years later, by another daring adventurer, the French explorer, La Salle. Neither succeeded. Each was cut off in the midst of his efforts by an unforeseen enemy, the last and greatest of all.

Immediately on reaching his goal Soto's tireless brain began to work out the details of his great plan. He even selected the officers and crews who were to take to Cuba the brigantines he purposed building, while he himself, with the remainder of his force, would hold the ground which he had chosen for his colony. Men were set to cutting timbers, while others put up forges and wrought such bits of iron as they had into bolts and nails; and the Indians were bidden to bring quantities of gum collected from pine-trees. But disease was already at work upon him. The malaria of the Red River swamps had engendered a fever in his system, already weakened by long exposure and by the shock of sore reverses. He sank day by day. When he felt that his end was near, he called his officers together, asked forgiveness for any wrong that he might have done to any, and requested them

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to choose one of their number to succeed him in the command. They replied with such comforting words as they could summon and referred the choice of a commander to him. He named Luis Moscoso de Alvarado, who had been his lieutenant from the first. Then officers and men alike swore allegiance to their new leader.

Shortly afterward Soto, charging his officers with his last breath to persevere in his great undertaking, took his leave of earth. So the restless brain that had planned an empire and the proud heart that no reverses could subdue lay still in death. A little more than four years from the time that he left Spain brilliant and courted, with almost royal titles and power, he died ruined in an Indian village.

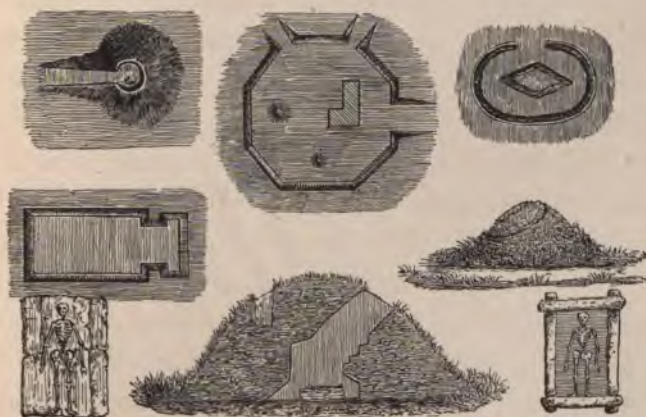
He was a fine type of the Spanish soldier, in a day when Spain bred great warriors. His daring was splendid, and his fortitude matchless. He was a superb horseman, invincible as one of Charlemagne's paladins, at all points a magnificent cavalier. He bore his full share in all privations, and pitiless as he was towards the poor "infidels," he was just and merciful to his soldiers. His iron will is shown by his holding them to his enterprise long after they had sickened of it.

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How was the mighty fallen! Now he was not secure even of a grave in the land where he had dreamed of an empire. The first thought of his officers was as to how they could hide his death, for they dreaded the effect on the Indians of learning that the leader whom they had represented as the "Child of the Sun," had died like a common mortal. At the first they said that he had gone away on a visit to Heaven and would return after a while. This would for a time account for his disappearance. But the finding of his body would rudely dispel the illusion. Therefore extraordinary precautions were necessary. At dead of night, with sentinels posted to keep the Indians at a distance, the whole command followed the dead Adelantado to the grave. They smoothed and trampled the earth to obliterate every trace of the interment. Still the Indians seemed suspicious, and the Spaniards, apprehending that they would dig up the body and wreak their vengeance on it by insult, resolved that something more effectual must be done. Taking a hint perhaps from the romantic burial of Alaric the Goth, who, when his mighty wanderings and conquests were ended, was laid for his long

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sleep in the bed of the River Busento, they determined to commit the Conquistador's remains to the keeping of the Great River. In his rude coffin, the hollowed trunk of an oak, the dauntless leader, at midnight, was carried out into mid-stream and lowered into the deep. ✓



INDIAN BURIAL MOUNDS

The first effect of his death was a decided relief to his men. The indomitable will that had held them fast to a distasteful enterprise was no more. Despite his dying charge, there was no question of staying, but only of the best way of getting out of the country. Should they proceed with the building of the boats and seek

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Cuba by sea? Or should they go overland to Mexico? The latter course seemed the less difficult and was decided on. With alacrity the adventurers broke camp and set their faces once more toward the West.

We shall not follow them in their march. One or two places which are mentioned, such as Naguatex (now Natchitoches), in northern Louisiana, enable us to trace their route. They had the usual conflicts with Indians. In one case the latter drew them to a distance by attacking and then running away. While the Spaniards were chasing them another band fell upon the camp and were plundering it when the Spaniards unexpectedly returned. They routed these marauders and captured a number of them. Moscoso inflicted a savage punishment by cutting off the nose and the right hand of every one of the poor wretches. In another instance he avenged himself upon a guide who was charged with leading them astray, by turning loose the famished dogs on him. The miserable creature screamed under their cruel fangs tearing his quivering flesh. They were pulled off and leashed. Then he confessed that his chief had ordered him to lead them astray, but vowed that he

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would guide them truly now. But the Spaniards were so insensate in their rage that they again turned loose the dogs. These quickly tore him to pieces. Thus they deprived themselves, in their fury, of their sole guide in a country in which they were roaming without food and without knowing where they were.

One does not wonder that, with such methods, they soon became disheartened and hopeless of being able to reach Mexico. They were now in northeastern Texas. Scouts who were sent out returned with the report that before them was a sterile land, destitute of corn and inhabited only by wandering tribes who raised no crops, but lived by hunting. After three years of roaming, they actually were in the very region in which Cabeza de Vaca had spent the greater part of his time. They even found traces of his stay, in the form of little crosses which the natives put up over their tepees, believing that they were "good medicine" and would keep away sickness.

Disheartened, the officers determined to return to the Great River, to build boats, and to seek Mexico by sea. This resolution was carried out with amazing persistency. Cold rains poured

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upon them and so flooded the country that they could not find a dry spot to lie on. They were almost wholly without food, and they suffered constant attacks from the natives. Still they made their way back to the Mississippi. When they reached it they were so exhausted that numbers of them, including the brilliant captain of the Portuguese troop, Vasconcelos, died after coming into a land of rest and plenty. They routed the Indians from two villages and took possession of their supplies of corn, beans, and pumpkins. After resting some weeks, they set to work and built boats large enough to carry them all and strong enough to withstand the sea. On July 2, 1543, a little more than four years from their landing in Florida, they embarked and dropped quietly down the river.

Their departure was quickly known to the Indians, and they swarmed in canoes to harass them. The lately insolent invaders were now distressed fugitives, eager to escape without further conflict. The Indians fully appreciated the situation and enjoyed it to the utmost. During the two weeks occupied in descending the river, a fleet of canoes unceasingly hung on their flanks, attacking them at every opportunity, and the



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brigantines were compelled to keep close together for mutual protection. By the time that they reached the mouth of the river they were so worn out by the incessant pursuit that they threw themselves down on a sandy island and slept like dead men.

Now came a peculiarly perilous part of the retreat, the passage by sea. For fifty-eight days they worked their way along the shore almost perishing at times with thirst, always scant of provisions, tormented by clouds of mosquitoes, and buffeted by storms that severely tested their rude boats. But they came through it all safely, and at last reached Panuco, in Mexico, so ragged, blackened, and wretched in appearance that they were scarcely recognizable as white men.

Thus ended this remarkable expedition, in its way a most notable performance. It was insolent, brutal, and bloody throughout. It left a broad trail of fire and pillage, of maiming and murder, wherever it went. And it accomplished not a single good result to offset its many evils and crimes. Even its discoveries were allowed to sink into oblivion.

Chapter XII

THE SECOND CONQUEST OF NEW MEXICO



Chapter XII

THE SECOND CONQUEST OF NEW MEXICO

The Friars in New Mexico. — Juan de Oñate leads an Expedition to New Mexico. — Treacherous Massacre of Spaniards at Acoma. — Desperate Fighting. — Villagran's Daring Leap. — Capture of Acoma. — How El Camino del Padre got its Name. — New Mexico Pacified. — Heroic Work of the Friars. — Spain's Honorable Record.

THE story of the Southwest is full of thrilling episodes. Again and again we encounter examples of splendid heroism. The withdrawal of Coronado from New Mexico left the work of occupying that region to be done over again. When he retired, however, three friars who accompanied him insisted on remaining behind, to carry on missionary work. Each chose a field, and each, sooner or later, was murdered by the Indians, who with good reason hated their race.

After their disappearance there were no white men in New Mexico for many years, and the Pueblo Indians sank back into their old existence,

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dreaming away life in their weird cliff-abodes, cultivating their little corn-fields on the plains below, holding their mysterious pagan ceremonies in the dark estufas, and dancing their ancient symbolic dances. Many and many a night, while the red glow of the fire on the hearth lighted up their dusky, lowering faces, and the storm whistled without, laying its thick mantle of snow on the terraced roofs, they talked of terrible times that were gone by, when pale, bearded men appeared among them on swift monsters ; when the people of Tiguex must go out homeless and foodless to make room for the high-handed strangers whom they had welcomed ; when the sky was red with the flames of burning pueblos ; when the sword devoured, the keen lance pierced, and the deadly thunder-stick laid low the escaping inmates, and poor wretches who had surrendered were roasted at the stake.

People who have no writing, but talk about things incessantly, remember them far more vividly than those who put them into books and then pass on to something else. So these events were kept fresh in the minds of the Pueblo Indians. This fact will account for some of the occurrences of which we are about to speak.

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It was in 1598, forty-six years after Coronado's departure, that the second considerable Spanish force appeared in New Mexico. It was led by Juan de Oñate. He was an ideal man for such an undertaking, for he was a native of the arid region of Zacatecas, in Mexico, was accustomed to the life of such a country, and knew the Indians' ways. Though he was "born with a golden spoon in his mouth," — for his father, who discovered and owned the enormously productive silver mines of Zacatecas, was the first North American millionaire, — and he himself had married a granddaughter of Cortes, he had a great ambition to be an explorer, and he realized it splendidly. He was going into New Mexico "for keeps," and he spared no expense. His expedition cost him a round million before it started. There were two hundred soldiers, as many colonists, with women and children, and herds of sheep and cattle. He entered New Mexico, took formal possession in the King's name, marched up the Rio Grande, and founded San Gabriel where the hamlet of Chamita now stands, north of Santa Fé. This was the second town in the present United States, the first being Saint Augustine, in Florida. Seven years after-

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wards, in 1605, he founded Santa Fé, The City of the Holy Faith. He made extensive explorations, one as far to the north as Nebraska ; and he was the colonizer of New Mexico, which has been the abode of white men from his time to ours. But we have space only for one incident of the earliest occupation.

Oñate met with no immediate resistance. The Pueblo Indians had little love for his race and felt sore at their intrusion. But this strong force of four hundred was sufficient to over-awe them. One pueblo after another took the oath of allegiance to the Spanish crown, and everything looked peaceful. When Oñate, on a tour of inspection, came to Acoma, that town perched on a high rock of which we have had former mention, the principal men came down from the lofty abode, showed themselves very friendly, and invited the Spanish commander and his men to visit them. He accepted, with a few followers climbed the almost perpendicular trail, with its notches for hands and feet in the rock-walls, and reached the eerie abode. They were shown everything about the place, the strange terraced houses, with story piled up over story, like steps ; the deep natural reservoirs, where the gathered rain and snow-

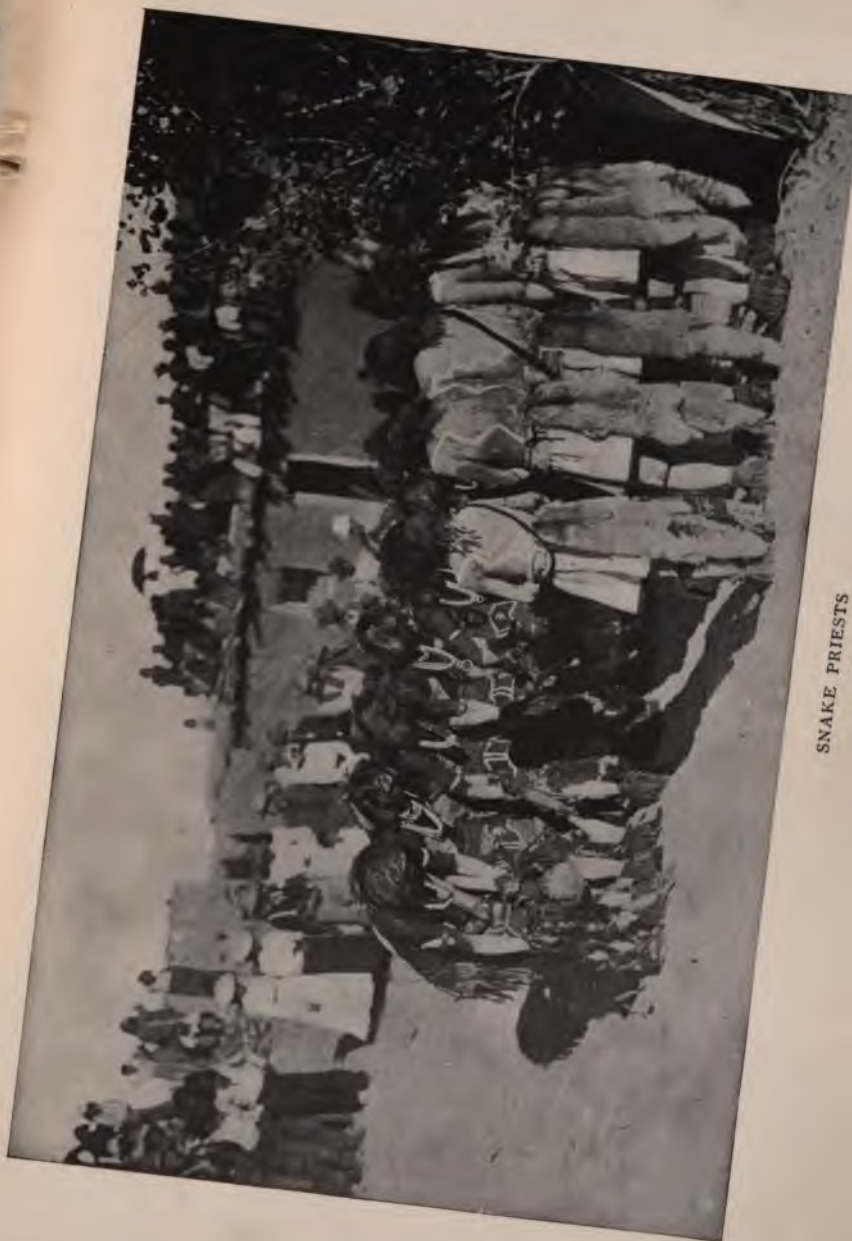
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water formed the only supply ; and the sheer precipices, of dizzy height, bounding the plateau on every side. In these curious houses there are no doors, but only holes in the roof, through which the inmates reach the rooms below by ladders. The Acomans led Oñate to one of the openings and invited him to descend. He looked down and saw that all was dark below. In fact, it was the kiva, or estufa, the gloomy chamber in which councils were held and the wild mysteries of their religion were celebrated. With a swift sense of danger, he declined. Well for him that he did ! The dark room was filled with warriors lying ready to kill him, and his death would have been the signal for a general onslaught on the Spaniards. There was a long score to be wiped out, and the Indians thought this a good opportunity. When he declined they merely deferred the day of vengeance.

Shortly after Oñate's departure came one of his tried captains, Juan de Zaldivar, with thirty men. He, too, was invited to visit the town. Leaving half of his men below, he ascended with the other half. As to what there took place I shall quote Mr. C. F. Lummis's "The Spanish Pioneers," a book of thrilling interest : "The town was so

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full of wonders, the people so cordial, that the visitors soon forgot whatever suspicions they may have had: and by degrees they scattered hither and yon to see the strange sights. The natives had been waiting only for this; and when the war-chief gave the wild whoop, men, women, and children seized rocks and clubs, bows and flint knives, and fell furiously upon the scattered Spaniards. It was a ghastly and an unequal fight the winter sun looked down upon that bitter afternoon in the Cliff City. Here and there, with back against the wall of one of those strange houses, stood a gray-faced, tattered, bleeding soldier, swinging his clumsy flint-lock, club-like, or hacking with desperate but unavailing sword at the dark, ravenous mob that hemmed him, while stones rained upon his bent visor, and clubs and cruel flints sought him from every side. There was no coward blood among the doomed band. They sold their lives dearly; in front of every one lay a sprawling heap of dead. But one by one the howling wave of barbarians drowned each grim, silent fighter, and swept off to swell the murderous flood about the next. Zaldivar himself was among the first victims; and two other officers, six soldiers, and two servants



SNAKE PRIESTS

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The men at the foot of the cliff, together with the survivors of the massacre, remained several days under the over-hanging rock, hourly expecting an attack from the savages. But none was made, probably because the Indians still stood in that awe of horses. Then they broke up into bands and carried the news of the disaster to every point where there were Spaniards. All hastened to assemble at San Gabriel, expecting an uprising of all the pueblos, such as the terrible one which took place eighty-two years later. But the Indians knew better than to attack the Spaniards awaiting them in their fortified stronghold.

Oñate was resolved to punish Acoma. But it would need a strong force to storm those beetling cliffs, defended by some three hundred native warriors, besides a hundred Navajo allies; and he could not spare many men, without weakening too much the garrison of San Gabriel and exposing the women and children there to slaughter. Finally he and his officers agreed on sending seventy men, under the command of Vicente de Zaldivar, brother of the murdered captain, who craved the honor of leading this forlorn hope.

Zaldivar and his little band, the most of them

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armed only with swords and lances, with one little *pedrero* (a howitzer that fired stone projectiles) lashed on the back of a horse, filed out of San Gabriel, little expecting to see it again. A march of eleven days brought them to Acoma. Runners had warned the Indians of the Spaniards' coming, and they swarmed on the edge of the cliff, the braves shouting defiance and curses to the Spaniards, while the medicine-men, hideously painted and befeathered, beat their drums and loudly called on their gods to overwhelm the invaders. Zaldivar shouted a summons to surrender, but his voice was drowned by the clamor overhead. All that night the Indians kept up a frenzied war-dance, while the Spaniards, bivouacked on the bare sands, arranged their plans. It was evident that an assault by main force would be folly, and that stratagem must supply the place of numbers.

At daybreak the signal for the advance was given. While the main body made a pretended attack in front, keeping up a constant fusilade with their few arquebuses, twelve men, who had hidden during the night under the overhanging rocks, crept around the rear, with the one little gun, and, unperceived, began to scale the rocks, drag-

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ging the pedrero by ropes. Climbing from ledge to ledge, weighted as they were with their arquebuses and armor, and pulling the cannon after them, they reached at last the pinnacle of a lofty rock whose top was on the level of the plateau, but separated from it by a narrow but fearful chasm. This gave them a place from which to operate their gun. They had been all the day in accomplishing so much, and it was late in the afternoon when a loud report gave notice to their comrades on the other side that they had won their position. It was a tremendous surprise to the Acomans, and a most unwelcome one, to have the stone balls of the pedrero crashing into the pueblo.

That night the Spaniards went in little parties and cut down small pines on the precipitous sides of the valley in which Acoma stands, and with infinite labor dragged them across the intervening plain and up to the dizzy height which their twelve comrades had reached. All the force was now assembled on this point, except a small number left below to guard the horses. Across the chasm which separated the Spaniards' rock from the plateau lay the Indians, hiding themselves and awaiting the attack. At daybreak

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a squad of Spaniards rushed forward, with a log on their shoulders, and threw it so that it bridged the chasm. Others dashed across the dizzy foot-bridge, the Indians hastened to repel them, and the fighting became furious. Before many of the assailants had gone over, one who had crossed in his excitement seized the rope and jerked the log over. Thus he and his companions were cut off. They had all they could do to defend themselves, and the main body was unable to come to their support.

In this crisis a hero came to the rescue and saved the day. He was Captain Gaspar Perez de Villagran, one of the fearless young fellows of whom Spain sent not a few to the New World. He had already made a record as an athlete, and his muscular training served him well on this occasion. He saw the dilemma of his countrymen across the chasm, too hard pressed to be able to stop to replace the log. He measured the distance with his eye. The leap required nerves of steel and trained muscles. If he fell short, he would plunge to a fearful death on the rocks at the bottom of the abyss. But he did not hesitate. Going as far back as he could for a start, he dashed forward to the brink and with a

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mighty leap cleared the yawning gulf. Then with another prodigious effort he pushed the log out until the men on the other side could catch the end. Once more the slender bridge was put in position, and the Spaniards hastened over to the aid of their comrades.

Now the fighting became desperate. The Indians were defending their homes and, moreover, had wrought themselves up to a frenzy. They outnumbered the Spaniards nearly ten to one and swarmed about them with their rude weapons, bows and arrows, clubs, and knives of keen flint-flakes with ragged edges. On the other side was the disciplined valor of the Old World, wielding its arms and sheathed in mail. There was no time to stop and load the arquebuses, but swinging them like clubs and hewing their way with their short swords, now and again dazed by blows which only their helmets hindered from dashing out their brains, sometimes pausing to pull out arrows from their quivering flesh, the little band fought its way step by step, until the Indians suddenly broke and betook themselves to the refuge of their great adobe-house, a fort in itself.

Now there was time for the assailants to breathe.

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Once more, it is said, Zaldivar called on the offenders to surrender, promising safety to all but those who had been concerned in the treacherous massacre. In vain! The Indians would listen to no terms, but stuck doggedly to their huge barricaded house. Can we blame them if they distrusted the faith of these men whose countrymen had burned in cold blood their prisoners, surrendered under solemn pledges of safety, at Tiguex?

Now the Spaniards dragged the little pedrero in front of the great terraced pile and opened fire. But the adobe walls, crumbling under the battering of the stone balls, formed great heaps of clay, and the assailants needed to storm the place and carry it by main force, house by house, room by room. A fire broke out and added to the horror of the scene. The shrieks of women and the screams of terrified children mingled with the defiant yells of warriors. Zaldivar, it is said, made great efforts to save the women and children, but numbers perished beneath the falling walls. The carnage was fearful. The Indians neither asked nor expected quarter. Five hundred were killed, besides a great number wounded. And of the surviving Spaniards every one bore on his body

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some ghastly memento of that deadly struggle, the bloodiest in the history of New Mexico.

It was noon of the third day since the fighting began when some of the old men came out and sued for mercy. It was readily granted. Indeed, there were but few left on whom vengeance could have been taken. Of the able-bodied nearly all were dead; a few had made their escape. The town that had been built by nobody knows how many years of patient labor, in carrying every stone, every load of clay, every timber on the people's backs up the steep ladders, was so ruined that it needed to be rebuilt; and all the weary work was to be done over again. The wretched survivors had lost, besides, all their food stored in their houses, and were in sore want. If Acoma had successfully resisted, all New Mexico would have been aflame. The fall of the great stronghold sounded a note of warning to all the land to submit to the conquering strangers, and it did. This event inaugurated a long era of peace, and New Mexico became a settled province of Spain, with Santa Fé as its capital. But for many long years Acoma, though powerless, remained bitterly hostile to the Spaniards.

It is a relief to turn from scenes of bloodshed

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to the records of a quiet heroism which we can extol without a qualifying word. In the pioneer work of New Mexico the priests of the Roman Catholic Church played a part which deserves ever to be borne in grateful remembrance. For these men effected a conquest nobler and vastly more difficult than that of the sword, and they accomplished it in constant peril, and, in a great number of cases, at the actual sacrifice of their lives. A traveler among the Pueblo Indians to-day meets with many a reminder of the patient padres of the old days. Acoma furnished once more a notable example. The tourist who visits that famous rock will ascend to the pueblo by a stone stairway called by the natives *el Camino del Padre* (the Father's Path). The story of that name is as follows. In 1629 Fray Juan Ramirez went to Acoma, to found a mission there. He had declined a military escort, preferring to go simply as a soldier of the cross. The old bitter feeling was strong in Acoma, and when the people saw one of the hated race coming they crowded the edge of the rock, shouting curses and threats down to him. Undaunted, he went on and began to climb up. Just then a little girl, leaning over the giddy verge of the cliff,

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lost her balance, toppled over, and was supposed by her people to have fallen all the way to the bottom. But it chanced that she had landed on a sandy ledge not far below. There the friar, coming up, saw her. He climbed to where she was, took up the frightened little creature, and carried her in his arms to the top. She was the pledge of peace. Her safety seemed to her people a miracle, and it turned their hearts to the padre, as to a heaven-sent man. The work which began with this happy augury prospered so greatly that Fray Juan lived more than twenty years with his flock, beloved by them. Under his direction, they built a large church with enormous labor, and they made great progress, not merely in learning to read and write Spanish, but in acquiring the spirit of a Christian civilization.

This example is typical of what was done by scores of devoted priests. New Mexico is full of the monuments of their patient labors. How enormous their task was we can hardly conceive.

There is not any reason to believe that the Indians of New Mexico, like those of México, offered human sacrifices. Still, the imaginary divinities whom they worshiped were grim and

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cruel tyrants. When the Acomans fled from the Enchanted Mesa (see Chapter the Ninth) they made no effort to rescue the forlorn old people who remained on the top of the rock, because they believed it to be the will of their gods that they should return thither no more.

Imagine the immense difficulty which the Spanish priests had in converting a people whose idea of religion was such as this. They had first to convince them that the gods they believed in were not even real beings, but only dark phantoms, born of ignorance and fear. In the place of the old superstitions, they had to give them the new and strange teaching of a religion of gentleness, patience, and forgiveness. This the faithful padres did, more by example than by precept. They lived with their barbarous flocks, shared their privations, bore with their faults, patiently taught them all that they were capable of learning, and, by proving how much they cared for them, gained their confidence and love. They literally took their lives in their hands when they went, alone and on foot, to carry the message of the cross to the pueblos. They had to encounter the bitter hostility of a people who hated their race. Sometimes this burst out on the spot, and

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they were killed almost at their first appearance. At other times it smouldered for years and seemed to have died, then suddenly flared up in fury when there was a general uprising. In the

Pueblo insurrection of 1680 the priests, very generally, were killed and their churches destroyed, for the natives were bent on exterminating the last white man on their soil.

In spite of all this, the thirsty plains of the Southwest were dotted here and there with solid stone churches in which faithful priests, in poverty and hardship, and in daily peril of their lives, preached the gospel to the red man.

Let us give Spain her due. In these sketches we have seen instances enough of savage cruelty. But these were the acts of individual Spaniards. The aim of the Spanish government was to treat the Indians kindly, and, in the main, it was faithfully carried out. The whole policy of Spain was directed to fitting the Indians to share in the national life, making them part of the people. They were regularly taught. Every church and convent in Spanish America had a school for Indians attached to it. By 1544 there were so many who knew how to read and write that a book was made for them in their own language.

THE SECOND CONQUEST

There were even industrial schools to train them in the mechanical arts. Through this wise and humane policy the natives of Mexico and New Mexico, whom the Spaniards found so ignorant and cruel and so addicted to terrible superstitions, were converted into a quiet, peaceable, and contented people.

APPENDIX

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I

THE STORY OF ANCIENT MEXICO

Reasons for thinking that America was peopled from Asia. — Evident Connection between the Mexicans and certain Tribes of our Northwest Coast. — The Toltecs. — The Mayas. — The Aztecs. — Reasons for thinking them all to belong to a Common Stock. — The Cultivation of Maize, the Foundation of the Social Progress of Mexico. — Toltec succeeded by Aztec Supremacy. — Progress hindered by the Lack of Domestic Animals and of Iron. — Lord Macaulay's Opinion as to the alleged Civilization of Ancient Mexico.

MANY hundreds, possibly thousands, of years ago seven savage tribes came from the North, at intervals, into the central region of the country now called Mexico. They were all related to each other, though they bore different names. The tradition of their descendants was that they came out of seven caves in the North. Most likely, this means that, in their slow southward movement, they lived for some generations in cliff-dwellings.

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Whence came these people, is a question that cannot be answered with any degree of certainty. But many scholars hold strongly that they were immigrants from Asia. Two important facts point to this conclusion. One is that, beyond any question, our continent and Asia formerly were continuous. Behring Strait is said to be of comparatively recent formation, and Behring Sea is known to be a shallow body of water. Before the sinking of the land underlying it and the rushing together of the waters of the Arctic and Pacific oceans there was a broad territory, now sunk in the sea, over which dwellers on the western side of the Pacific could pass over to the lands on its eastern side.

If this view is correct, there must have been, for hundreds of years, a succession of savage hordes pouring over from crowded Asia into America. British Columbia and our northwest coast were the regions where they first found themselves on American soil. Thence some, taking an easterly direction and spreading themselves out towards Hudson Bay, were the fathers of the race known to us as the Athapascans. Others, journeying southeast, later were distinguished as the Algonquins, the Iroquois, and

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the Dakotans. Still others pushed their way down the Pacific coast. Some tribes no doubt, finding congenial locations on the shore of the ocean, abandoned roaming and settled down. Thus we come to our second point. Certain tribes of British Columbia, especially the Haidah, show the most unmistakable connection with the old Mexicans. This is particularly noticeable in the peculiar character of their carvings in wood, stone,



SPECIMENS OF CARVING FROM THE
NORTHWEST COAST

and bone. It is said that no one, comparing these with similar work found in ancient temples of Mexico, can doubt that those who executed them belonged to the same original stock. An idol from a Haidah lodge in British Columbia

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would at once be recognized as belonging to the same type with the grotesque images found in Mexico and Yucatan.

This splitting of a tribal stock into widely sundered fragments need not surprise us. It is not unusual to find instances of such a separation. The Apaches who roam the burning plains of the Southwest are now known to be a branch of the Athapascans who wander over the wilds, covered with ice and snow for a great part of the year, of the British Northwest Territory, thousands of miles distant. Further, these North Pacific tribes are said to be so noticeably like the natives of Eastern Asia that individuals among them might easily be mistaken for Asiatics. These facts undoubtedly give strong color to the theory that our continent was peopled from Asia. But this movement certainly took place at a date so remote that we are warranted in treating the American aborigines as a distinct race.

These new-comers on Mexican soil undoubtedly were desperate savages. In the country into which they came they found other peoples, earlier immigrants, already domesticated. They subdued them, became the ruling race, and at the

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same time learned from them whatever industrial arts they possessed, including, probably, the cultivation of maize and various uses of the aloe.

In reading of Mexico and its antiquities we constantly encounter mention of the Toltecs, a name which has been explained as meaning "builders." For a long time there was the same tendency as in the case of the so-called Mound-builders to treat them as a mysterious race that has vanished. Whenever natives were asked concerning the origin of ancient structures, they always answered, "The Toltecs built them," just as old writers were wont to dispose of anything unfamiliar in early Greek history by attributing it to the Pelasgi. The better opinion now seems to be that the Toltecs were simply an advanced tribe, kindred to the Aztecs. Their first city was a place called Tollan, on a hill known as Coatepetl, or Serpent Hill. After some generations, hard pressed by hostile neighbors, they retreated southward. According to some writers, they took up their abode in the valley of Mexico and built the famous city which Cortes took. According to others, they journeyed yet further, settled in Yucatan and

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Central America, and developed that remarkable advancement of which the traces are so striking. In either view, there is not anything mysterious about the Toltecs. Probably they were at one time the predominant tribe in their region, but after their removal from Tollan became merged in the more important tribe, the Aztecs. Perhaps the history of early England affords a parallel case. Of the invaders who overran it the Angles must surely have been, at the first, the more important people, since they gave their name (Angle-land) to the country. But they seem to have lost their importance as the kindred Saxons came to the front. By the time of the Norman conquest we hear only of Saxons. Probably in a similar way, by the time of the Spanish conquest, the Toltecs had lost their early predominance and become merged in the Aztecs.

Another people of whom we read much are the Mayas, of Yucatan and Central America. There has been the same tendency as in the case of the Toltecs to treat them as a mysterious and vanished race, possessed of a wonderful culture. The better opinion now is that they were of the same stock as the Mexicans. There undoubtedly was a close similarity between the two in

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government, religion, and social advancement. They had many deities in common, and both sacrificed men and women to their gods, and



A PAGE FROM A MAYA BOOK

both were cannibals. Moreover, they believed themselves to be kindred peoples. In some points the Mayas were superior to the Mexicans. They had developed an alphabet and had a considerable literature. That eminent authority on

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the American aborigines, Dr. Daniel G. Brinton, says, "The Mayas were naturally a literary people. Had they been offered the slightest chance for the cultivation of their intellects, they would have become a nation of readers and writers." Instead of having a chance, they were crushed by the Spaniards and never rose again.

On the other hand, in some particulars they stood below the Mexicans, who especially excelled in their social organization. The general opinion is that they had passed the zenith of their progress before the conquest, whereas the Aztecs were steadily advancing when Cortes shattered their confederacy. If they were indeed already a declining people, we can more readily understand the utter decay that has overtaken them.

What tended most of all to throw an air of mystery about the Mayas was the notion that the cities whose ruins have excited the wonder of travelers were very ancient, and had been reared by a people far superior to the present inhabitants. On the other hand, one of the best-known explorers, Mr. Stephens, as quoted by Dr. Fiske, says, "I repeat my opinion, that we are not warranted in going back to any ancient

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nation of the Old World for the builders of these cities ; that they are not the work of people who have passed away, and whose history is lost, but that there are strong reasons to believe them the creations of the same races who inhabited the country at the time of the Spanish conquest, or some not very distant progenitors. Some are known to have been inhabited at the time of the Spanish conquest. Others were no doubt already in ruins." What seems to settle the matter beyond all doubt is that a Maya document has been discovered which was written *after the coming of the Spaniards*. It tells the story of the conquest and refers explicitly to Chichen-Itza and Izamal, two of the most famous ruined cities, as inhabited towns during the time that the Spaniards were coming, from 1519 to 1542. We may therefore conclude, with Dr. Fiske, that some of the Maya cities, known to us only by their ruins, were "no older than the ancient city of Mexico, built A. D. 1325."

Before a common-sense criticism the mystery of the Mayas vanishes along with the kindred mysteries of the Mound-builders and the Toltecs. Because of the close similarity of the Mayas and the Mexicans, the treatment here given to the

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latter may be considered as applying equally to the former. No separate discussion is necessary.

The possession of a stable food which they could grow was the turning-point in the career of the invaders of the Mexican valley. Thus the maize-culture changed them from wandering savages, living from hand to mouth, into barbarians advancing on the road towards civilization. Having fields, with growing crops, they became attached to the soil, built villages and towns, and began to develop a wonderfully interesting sort of social life. It is not difficult to imagine these lately rude hordes gaining ground with each generation in the direction of knowing how to live. As they acquired a growing interest in a settled life, they learned much from those whom they had dispossessed. History tells us of more than one conquering people who acquired the arts of life from the vanquished race. The rude barbarians who burst into the splendid Roman empire, overran its fruitful plains, and sacked its opulent cities, in many instances learned the arts of the subject people, became permanent settlers, and built up a new civilization on the ruins of that which they had destroyed. One of the finest regions of Europe still bears the traces of this

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transformation. The name Lombardy carries us back to the time when a horde of wild, bearded warriors (Lombards, or Longobarten, that is, Longbeards) overran the fertile valleys of northern Italy and began a marvelous career of civilization.

How long these new-comers into what we call Mexico had been on American soil before they



THE FAMOUS DIGHTON ROCK

reached the region where history finds them, we have no means of knowing. Quite likely, hundreds of years had passed in the slow process by which they had gradually drifted or been pushed southward. In the opinion of some writers, they were the builders of the earliest mounds,¹ and these were partly defensive structures which they reared in order to protect themselves against the attacks of warlike neighbors. The mounds were,

¹ See p. 95.

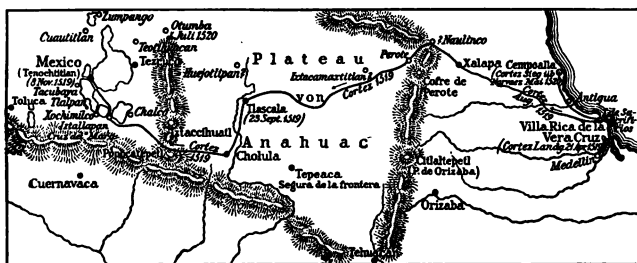
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then, an expression of the same tendency to build, both for defence and for religious purposes, which afterwards showed itself so markedly in the lands of their adoption, Mexico and Central America.

After the immigrants had become settled in their new home, one tribe, as we have seen, became especially noted in the march of progress. These were the Toltecs, renowned builders. Their city of Tollan was made up of massive stone structures, which stood long after its inhabitants had wandered or been driven away. It is said that the houses of the modern city of Tula are constructed chiefly of the materials used by these ancient builders in rearing their abodes and temples. There is a fascinating interest about this old people. They cultivated especially the arts of peace. Their religion seems to have been milder than that of the tribe who succeeded them in power, and to have been free from those atrocious and revolting features of which we shall have occasion to speak later, and which so shocked the Spaniards. They left their impress so deeply stamped upon the minds of all that region that, for hundreds of years afterwards, all that was worthiest was ascribed to them. When

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they were driven from Tollan, as it seems, by warlike tribes, they took refuge in Cholula; their milder religion became tainted with the bloody rites which the Spaniards found in vogue there; and they themselves were absorbed in the tribe which had come to the front as the ruling one, and which the Spaniards found predominant, the Aztecs.



MAP OF THE AZTEC TERRITORY, WITH CORTES' ROUTE

At the time of the conquest, the famous Aztec League was made up of three tribes, the Aztecs, whose city was Tenochtitlan (Mexico), the Tezucans, and the Tlacopans, whose cities stood on opposite shores of the lake. Of these the Aztecs were the leading people. For this reason they are taken as the typical race; and what is said of them in these pages is intended to apply equally to their allies. This remarkable people had attained a degree of advancement that was ex-

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traordinary, if we consider the enormous disadvantages under which they labored. They and the Mayas exhibited a social condition far the highest on the northern continent. It was strangely compounded of elements nearly approaching civilization in some points with others of the most debased and revolting nature. Let us consider some of the disadvantages against which they contended.

The first and greatest was the want of that without which civilization is impossible, the help of domestic animals. We only realize what this means when we consider how greatly the people of the Old World have been indebted for their advancement to the horse, the ass, the ox, the sheep, the goat, the camel, the elephant, the hog, and the reindeer. Not one of these animals was found in the New World, except the reindeer, of which the American species has never been tamed to man's use. The only domestic animal found in both worlds was the dog. This had been domesticated by the Aztecs and was used both for hunting and for food. Let us consider for a moment what a vital part the domesticated animals of the Old World have played in the upward march of humanity. If we try to place

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ourselves in that dim past when our Aryan forefathers were in their original seats, before the parting of the great family into those branches which afterwards became the mighty nations of the modern world, what do we find? Already in that gray dawn of human history, the ox was the friend of man. The Aryans were a pastoral people, possessing large herds of cattle. This fact was vital in those migratory movements which founded the great nations that have made European history. Herds of cattle make it possible for large bodies of people to transport themselves to new abodes, since they furnish a constant supply of the most nourishing food, milk, at the same time that their skins serve both for covering the individual body and for making tents to shelter the family. Truly, therefore, has the cow been called "the foster-mother of man." When the wandering tribe has settled down to a fixed habitation and begun to till the soil, the ox still is man's most useful friend, drawing both the clumsy plough that turns the soil and prepares it to receive the seed and the lumbering wagon that hauls home the ripe grain.

When the rude tillers of the soil have reached a more advanced stage of progress and have

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developed commerce, more rapid locomotion becomes a necessity. Then the horse comes on the scene as an equally indispensable ally. Probably, the domestication of this noble animal, with the resulting adaptation to man's varying needs, has been the greatest single achievement of our race and the most helpful, from the discovery of the use of fire until that of the application of steam. The horse has made possible immense strides of human progress. In a certain sense we may say that he has lifted man out of savagery to the plane where he has found himself able to harness the irresistible forces of nature and make them his servants. Through measureless ages the horse has prepared the way for steam and electricity. We show our estimate of his service to man when we state the capacity of an engine in terms of "horse-power." If civilized man is fast nearing a plane of development where he may dispense with the horse, it is only because this faithful friend has borne him up all the long ascent from savagery to the high level of to-day.

Every domesticated animal has its adaptation to particular uses which it alone can serve. Think of the inestimable service of the "silly

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sheep," clothing and feeding multitudes. The poor peasant who tills a little patch beside his cottage has an humble friend in his donkey. The patient little animal bears the produce of the plot to market and then finds his own board and lodging on the village common. Far up Alpine crags, where no other animal could plant its foot, the Swiss peasant's goat clammers secure, crops the scanty herbage, and nourishes a family with her milk. A veritable "ship of the desert" is the camel, trailing in long procession across waterless, burning wastes, laden with the precious products of the far East. To the Laplander the reindeer is all in all, supplying milk and transportation while living, and, when dead, flesh and covering for the person and the tent. He alone renders existence possible in vast regions where with his help, man lives, not only safe, but with a certain measure of comfort.

In short, we associate some kind of domestic animal with every race of men, and we see that our civilization at bottom rests on the service of our dumb helpers. Bearing in mind this fact, we realize how dire was the condition of the Mexicans. Except the dog, not a single domesticated quadruped did they possess. The fault

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was not theirs. Nature was peculiarly niggard in not giving to the New World the various animal species capable of domestication that abounded in the Old. All our various quadrupeds of to-day are descended from Old World ancestors. The Mexicans seem to have made the best use of their very slender opportunities. They had tamed the turkey, and they reared it in large numbers. They also bred pheasants, partridges, and pigeons; and they kept immense numbers of wild birds in aviaries for their feathers, which were used in making exquisite feather-work, to be arranged either in cloaks for state ceremonies or as decorations for walls.

In consequence of this lack, ploughs and wheeled carriages being impossible, all tillage of the soil was carried on by hand only, and commerce was limited to the exchange of such goods as could be transported in canoes across the lake or by land on the backs of porters. Therefore, also, roads there were none, the narrow paths, or trails, which led across the country being immeasurably inferior to the great highways which civilization is wont to create, and of which aboriginal America afforded one remarkable example in the vast system of roads which existed

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in ancient Peru, where the llama served the purposes of a pack-animal.

This lack of domestic animals had another and very startling consequence, to which attention will be invited in the succeeding chapter.

One other great need of the ancient Mexicans deserves particular mention. They had never learned the art of smelting iron-ore. Consequently, they had no tools capable of taking a keen edge. For working purposes their one metal was bronze. Their sharpest weapons and most serviceable tools were made of obsidian, a glassy volcanic substance. The most of their work was done with stone implements ; and when we consider this tremendous limitation, we may well wonder at the extent and variety of their operations and the skill and ingenuity of their craftsmen.

Such limitations alone would have sufficed to render civilization impossible. They give a certain color of justice to the severe judgment of Lord Macaulay, who, far from accepting the romantic estimate of certain historians, describes the ancient Mexicans as " savages who had no letters, who were ignorant of the use of metals,¹ who had

¹ This is incorrect: they were skilful workers in gold, silver, and copper.

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not broken in a single animal to labor [not their fault, we have seen], who wielded no better weapons than those which could be made out of sticks, flints, and fish-bones, who regarded a horse-soldier as a monster, half man and half beast, and who took a harquebusier for a sorcerer, able to scatter the thunder and lightning of the skies."

II

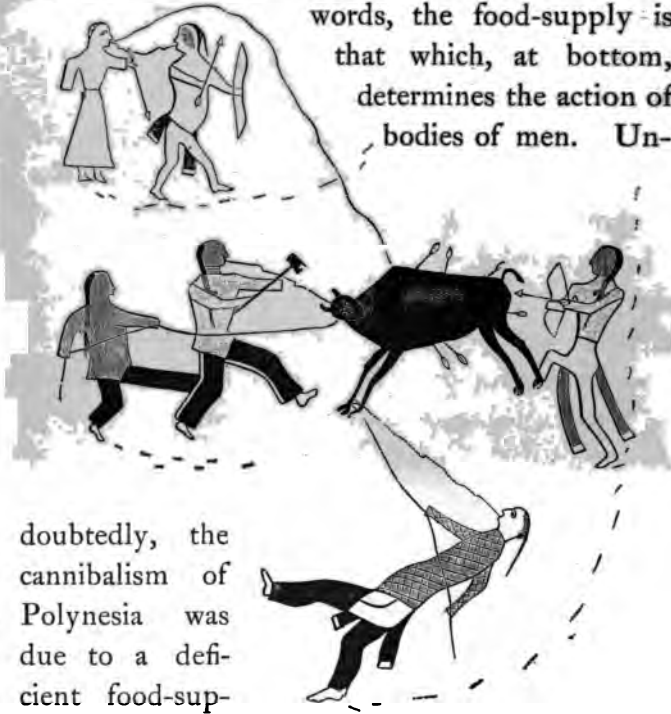
THE SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE OF ANCIENT MEXICO

A Deficiency of Animal Food made Cannibals of the Mexicans.
— The Country rich in Vegetable Products. — Floating Gardens. — Architecture. — Frequent Appearance of the Serpent-symbol. — Probable Connection of the Mexicans with some of the Mound-builders. — Picture-writing. — Rudimentary Commerce. — Slavery. — The Aztec League. — Mexican Worship a Development of Fetishism. — Its Revolting Elements.

AS we explore the beginnings of human society in all parts of the globe, we find that man's bodily needs are the chief cause of his exertions. The quest of food stimulates him to hunt, to fish, and therefore to exercise his ingenuity in devising ways and means of taking game and fish; and thus it develops his intelligence. It moves tribes to wander, like buffalo-herds seeking pasturage, into new regions, always in search of more abundant food-supplies. This was the great motive-power of all the early migrations. It is the same thing, on a lower plane, with the

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desire to "better themselves" that brings hundreds of thousands of immigrants every year to our country from the Old World. In other words, the food-supply is that which, at bottom, determines the action of bodies of men. Un-



doubtedly, the cannibalism of Polynesia was due to a deficient food-supply. These verdant islands

INDIANS KILLING A BISON. AN
INDIAN DRAWING

furnished abundant vegetable sustenance, and the sea supplied fish ; but, in the absence of game and of domestic animals, the craving for flesh found

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no satisfaction before Europeans had introduced goats, swine, and other four-footed beasts. Prisoners of war afforded what Nature had failed to supply ; and war was looked upon as the regular means of providing the most highly prized food that the savage islander knew of.

Precisely the same causes were operative in ancient Mexico. War was waged for the express purpose of taking prisoners, to be eaten. The Mexicans were man-eaters, just as we are beef-eaters and sheep-eaters. Prisoners of war were fattened in pens for slaughter, precisely as our farmers fatten pigs. It is true that this slaughter of human beings was connected with their religious ceremonies, but it was simply as food of the most precious kind that the victim was offered to the gods. After the smoking heart of the human victim had been taken out and held up to the divinity, the limbs were sold in the market like other kinds of food.

This circumstance gives us the key to the whole social life of ancient Mexico. It was brutal, barbarous, and horribly debased. At the conquest, the Spaniards were amazed at finding the most of the outward aspects of civilization. There was a people dwelling in permanent habi-

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tations of stone or of sun-dried clay and possessing a religion and temples; government and laws; arithmetic and chronology; painting and sculpture; arms and military discipline; primitive historical records; a rudimentary kind of commerce; agriculture, cotton-spinning, and weaving; and not a few luxuries. They leaped to the conclusion that this was a civilized people, and they wrote glowing accounts of the splendor of "the Emperor" and his court. This mistaken estimate of things Mexican has lasted almost until our own time. The more searching investigations of recent years have shown that this supposed brilliant civilization was, at the best, only a somewhat advanced barbarism. Besides the lack of several of the arts of life that are commonly regarded as essential to civilization, the horrible prevalence of man-eating held the social state of the Mexicans on a low level. Civilization, even where it includes slavery, always shows some finer sense of what man is and is capable of. Where men look upon fellow-beings only as cattle, to be fattened and fed upon, there is an innate debasement which excludes all the higher aspirations.

To this low level the Mexicans were con-

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demned chiefly by their lack of animals available for food and capable of being trained to labor. It put them thousands of years behind the European races in the march of progress. To such animals man owes wealth, leisure, mental development, and all that goes to make civilization. When the people of the Old World gained them, long before the dawn of history, they gained the means of rising above that degrading level of cannibalism on which they once stood, and on which the conquest found the Mexicans.

If we bear in mind this fatal circumstance, we may well be amazed at the positive achievements of this remarkable people. The following brief summary is taken from Dr. Brinton's "Races and Peoples" :

"The Aztecs were in the 'bronze age' of industrial development. Various tools, as hoes, chisels, and scrapers, ornaments, as beads and bells, formed of an alloy of tin and copper, and copper plates, of a crescentic shape, were used as a circulating medium in some districts. In welding and hammering gold and silver they were the technical equals of the goldsmiths of Europe of their day. Most of their cutting instruments, however, were of stone.

"They were lovers of brilliant colors and decorated

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their costumes and buildings with dyed stuffs, bright flowers, and the rich plumage of tropical birds. Such feathers were also woven into mantles and head-dresses of intricate design and elaborate workmanship, an art now lost. Their dyes were strong and permanent, some of them remaining quite vivid after four centuries of exposure to the light."

The New World, singularly deficient in large animals capable of being trained to man's service, was extraordinarily rich in vegetables available for food. Two, which have taken their place among the leading food-plants of the world, the potato and maize, are indigenous to the soil of America. The first was developed by the ancient Peruvians from a wild tuber, and was cultivated by them in enormous quantities. The second was found by the first Europeans in use all over this continent. It was the staple article of Mexican agriculture. It must have been developed at a very early day from some native plant; for its diffusion almost throughout the continent indicates that it had long been cultivated. Probably the Aztecs, when they entered Mexico, found its culture established among the people whom they dispossessed. Besides, they had fields of cotton, which they spun and wove; and the cacao was

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extensively cultivated, and from its bean was prepared a drink which was the favorite beverage of the rich, as, in its commercial form, of chocolate, it is used to-day by the prosperous classes of all countries. In addition, the Mexican had adapted many other native plants to man's use. What the bamboo is to the Hindoos the aloe-plant was, in a less degree, to the Mexicans, serving a variety of purposes. Out of its fermented juice they made an intoxicating beverage, octli, now called pulque, which certainly has little attraction for a refined taste, if it is correctly described as looking like soap-suds and having the smell and taste of rotten eggs. Nevertheless, it remains to this day the national drink of the lower class of Mexicans, and its pernicious use is the national curse. In the Aztec period, the habit was severely restricted by law, and repeated drunkenness was punished with death.

Population being dense, and land scarce, the industrious Aztecs had devised an ingenious method of extending the area available for cultivation. A compact mass of reeds and other vegetable matter, such as floated on the surface of the lake, was used for a foundation. On this was spread a thin layer of rich earth. Thus was

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formed a seed-bed in which the plants, kept in a constant state of moisture, grew rapidly and bore abundant crops. These "floating gardens" amazed the Spaniards. Examples of them might have been seen until very recent times on the shores of Lake Tezcuco.

In architecture the Mexicans had made remarkable progress, all the more striking because it undoubtedly was a purely native growth, not derived in any degree from the art of the Old World, from which it is absolutely distinct. The great pyramid of Cholula compares in magnitude with the most stupendous results of human labor. If, as seems most likely, the ancestors of the Mexicans were the people who built the earliest cliff-dwellings of Arizona and southwestern Colorado, they had already before their coming into Mexico developed a high degree of capacity for building in stone. These ancient abodes had been transformed from natural caves by rearing front-walls and partitions of stone. In other cases, entire houses of a considerable size had been built within the larger recesses of the rocks. Such a people coming into a region where trees suitable for timber were scarce, and settling down to the cultivation of the soil and the making of

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homes, would naturally rear habitations adapted to serve both for shelter and for defence against marauding neighbors. Thus stone was the inevitable material. The Mexicans seem to have begun with employing it in the form of large natural blocks, the interstices being filled with smaller ones, accurately adjusted. As they advanced in skill, smaller

stones were fitted to each other in the manner of mosaic rather than laid in regular courses. In the next stage of progress regular courses make their appearance, laid with a skill in which no people has ever sur-



TERRA COTTA FROM CHIRIQUI

passed these primitive masons. The last stage of progress was that of ornamentation. This was lavishly employed in the form of carved figures having a distinctive and unique character. Figures of men, elaborately draped, are shown, sometimes representing civil or religious ceremonies. These are either carved or are moulded in plaster. Various animals appear in these mural decora-

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tions; none so frequently as the serpent, whose worship formed an important part of the national religion. This skill in carving and the peculiar style of the figures form one of the most striking proofs by which we connect the Mexicans with the coast tribes of British Columbia.

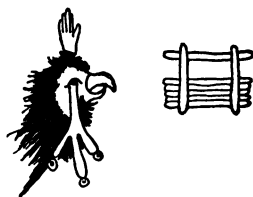
At the same time the prevalence of the serpent-symbol serves to establish an undoubted connection with the builders of some of the mounds of the central region of the United States. When we find among the relics contained in these mounds the serpent again and again represented in various conventional forms common in the monuments of ancient Mexico, especially in those of the horned serpent and the feathered serpent, we cannot doubt that there was, at the least, an intimate relation between these two peoples, and that to both the snake was an object of peculiar reverence.

When we consider that these striking achievements in architecture, entirely original in style, were made by a people who had no iron, but only bronze, and therefore no tools capable of taking a fine edge, we cannot but admire their native talent, their ingenuity, and their amazing perseverance.

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The aloe-plant, whose sap was fermented into the pernicious drink, pulque, had many other uses. One was that its fibre, beaten into thin layers, served the purpose of paper. By the application of a fine plaster, a smooth white surface was obtained. On this material pictographs were executed in brilliant vegetable colors. Ideas were conveyed by means of certain conventional pictures of objects which stood for words or parts of words.

Thus the Aztec writing had something of the character of a "rebus." It may be illustrated by the accompanying example, taken from F. S. Dellenbaugh's "The North Americans of Yesterday." It shows how the



AZTEC SYMBOL FOR
MONTEZUMA

name of Montezuma was written. The picture at the right is that of a mouse-trap, *montli*, which gives us the first syllable, *mon*. The head of the eagle furnishes the second syllable, *quah*. The lance piercing the eye gives us the third, *zo*; and the hand, the fourth, *ma*. Thus we obtain *Monquahzoma*, the Aztec form of the name.

Commerce was still in the rudimentary stage

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of barter. Having neither coins nor measures of weight, the Mexicans exchanged cotton cloths, the bright plumage of birds, pottery, cacao beans, green jade and other precious stones, and slaves. The products of one district were bartered for those of another, and regular markets were held frequently, at fixed intervals, in the city of Mexico, to which the people of the surrounding country flocked, bringing their commodities in canoes across the lake, or on their backs across the long causeways. Market-days in this strange, half-civilized city no doubt brought together a curious and motley throng, giving evidence, at one and the same time, of a certain social development and of the most debased savagery.

There, along with the materials of a certain barbaric luxury, was the wretched slave, who could not know on what day he would look upon the sun for the last time, for his master had the absolute disposal of his life, and might hand him over to the priests for sacrifice, sure of realizing a profitable return from the sale of the poor wretch's flesh.

This debasement of humanity gives us the key-note of Mexican society. It was a brutal military tyranny. The warrior class ruled every-

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thing and exercised its power pitilessly over those whom either the fortunes of war or their own misconduct had placed at its mercy. For, besides prisoners taken in battle and members of tribes whom the conquering Aztecs had reduced to subjection, there were others whom the severe laws of the confederacy put in the same miserable category. Those, for example, who failed to cultivate their plot of ground and those who refused to marry, lost their rights in the clan, and thus fell into a condition in which they could exist only as dependents on others, easily sinking into actual slavery. Those who have made the most careful research into aboriginal society in North America have found practically everywhere, from Hudson Bay to Panama, a single type of social organization, that which is known as the gentile, that is to say, based on the clan. This fact probably is due not so much to identity of race as to the well-recognized law that men in a similar stage of culture develop similar ideas. The clan organization seems to arise perfectly naturally as the most primitive form of social bond by which men are united for mutual help and defence. Undoubtedly it preceded in the Old World the rise of monarchy. In some

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cases, as in that of Rome, it survived the accession of kings as rulers. Therefore, the very fact of the clan organization as the characteristic American type may serve as an index of the degree of advancement which the aborigines had obtained. They were still barbarians only. There was not a king anywhere. Those whom Europeans mistakenly called kings were in reality either sachems, that is, civil chiefs, concerned with the ordinary government of the tribe, or war-chiefs. Had Europeans not been deceived by their own inherited notions of government, they would have seen that the seat of real authority was the tribal council.

Of Indian organization the famous Iroquois League is the best-known example, and it is deeply interesting to note the close resemblance to it of the Aztec League. The foundation of it was the clan, by which is meant a group of families united by a bond of kinship and having a common totem, or symbol, usually the figure of some animal, generally believed to be the real ancestor of the clan. Each communal house bore the totem of the clan occupying it carved on its front, just as one still sees the totem of the clan displayed on a post in front

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of a dwelling of some of the northwest-coast tribes.

The Aztecs numbered twenty clans, each electing its own leaders, and subdivided into four phratries, each of which occupied a distinct quarter of the city. Each phratry had its military chief and its "dart-house," corresponding to a regimental armory in one of our cities, in which weapons were stored. The four united phratries constituted the tribe. At the head of the tribe were two chiefs, one of whom, corresponding to the sachem of the northern tribes, was its civil magistrate. He bore the grotesque title of "snake-woman," from the fact that his official emblem was a female head surmounted by a snake. The other was the war-chief, who was taken commonly from a single family, in which that honor was hereditary. But the real authority was vested in the tribal council, composed of twenty speakers, each representing one of the twenty clans. Precisely as among the northern tribes, such as the Iroquois, nothing of importance could be done until it had been fully discussed and resolved upon in council. The war-chief was merely the executive who carried out the behests of the council and was liable to be

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deposed by it, as Montezuma was, when his imprisonment by the Spaniards deprived the tribe of a leader. Cortes, whose ideas of government were derived from European kingship, supposed that as long as he held Montezuma in his hands the people would be powerless. He learned his mistake when, on his exhibiting the captive chief in his official robes, with the expectation of thus quelling an angry mob, the populace responded by reviling and stoning their deposed leader.

Such was the Aztec organization, a compact military body, composed of clans and governed by a council in which each clan was represented. Nothing could have been simpler, nothing more effective. This alone, along with its numerical strength — the City of Mexico, at the conquest, is supposed to have held sixty thousand people — would have made the Aztec tribe mighty. Its alliance with the neighboring pueblos of Tezcucó and Tlacopan into a close league constituted the most formidable power on the American continent. In this confederacy the Aztecs were the predominant tribe. Its war-chief, therefore, took precedence of the other war-chiefs; which gave rise to the Spaniards' mistaken notion that Montezuma was an emperor, with kings subject to

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him. All booty was divided into fifths, of which two went to the Aztecs, two to the Tezcucans, and one to the Tlacopans.

These banded, ruthless warriors exercised a certain sway over a large territory extending across the peninsula, from ocean to ocean. This control was exerted, however, not in the way of incorporating and ruling other pueblos, but of exacting tribute from them. This was taken in corn, beans, cotton, and other products of the earth, and in manufactured articles. It was gathered by tax-collectors sent out for the purpose, whose authority was enforced by the dread of the League's bloody vengeance. On the slightest pretext, its ferocious army swooped down on the offending pueblo, harried it, butchered its defenders, and marched away with a long train of prisoners bearing the plunder of their own ruined homes, the women and children doomed to live in slavery, the men to die on the reeking altar of Tezcatlipoca. What the Spaniards, and after them all the world for generations, called an empire, was, in the words of a most able investigator, Mr. Bandelier, "only a partnership formed for the purpose of carrying on the business of warfare, and that intended not for the extension

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of territorial ownership, but only for an increase of the means of subsistence." It was simply a system of plunder enforced by terror. The Aztec League was a ferocious band of robbers, levying blackmail from neighboring pueblos, much in the same way as the Iroquois League terrorized nearly the whole country between the Connecticut and the Mississippi rivers.

Of the Mexican religion we get the key-note in two of its most important elements, snake-worship and human sacrifice. It was a development of fetishism, that is, the worship of material objects as representing spirits. In this case the spirits were supposed to rule the elements and various natural forces. The central figure, originally, was Quetzalcoatl, the Man of the Sun, who had assumed the shape of a bird, descended with outspread wings, and resumed human shape, for the purpose of instructing mankind in the arts of life. He must not be identified with the Sun himself, for whom a distinct worship was reserved. He was emphatically a man, devoted to the service of his human brethren, building and teaching men various industries. Eventually he was believed to have gone away, dispossessed, in fact, by the dark and bloody Tezcatlipoca, but prom-

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ising to return, with companions fair like himself, and re-establish his mild reign. It will be remembered that the expectation of his coming, which bears some faint resemblance to the Messianic hope of the Jews, exercised a powerful influence in determining the reception which the Mexicans gave to the Spaniards, whom they were at first inclined to regard as visitors from a higher world.

This worship of Quetzalcoatl was the worthiest element in the Mexican religion. The best opinion about him seems to be that he was a "culture-hero," that is, a real man who, at some remote time, taught his fellow-men the arts of life, and after his death, when his figure had become enveloped by the mists of tradition, by a familiar process became elevated into a god. To his mild worship the Toltecs were said to have been especially devoted. This legend probably indicates that in the earliest age of Mexican history, when the Toltecs were the predominant race, religion had a more humane character than in the succeeding period, when the ferocious Aztecs had become the leading people.

The name Quetzalcoatl, it is said, means Bird-Serpent or Feather-Serpent. This fact explains,

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therefore, the prevalence of the feathered serpent in the Mexican carvings. It was his recognized symbol. It might be supposed to explain, also, the peculiar reverence paid to snakes, if we did not know that similar honor was paid to other animals. Frogs, for example, on account of their association with rain, received worship along with the goddess of corn.

Here we have a clue to the spirit of Mexican religion. Essentially, it was an effort to propitiate the deities who were supposed to control the elements and thus to give or to withhold an abundant food-supply. We have a striking illustration of it still existing in our own country in the curious snake-dance of the Moquis, of Arizona.¹ The most intelligent observers are agreed that when the snakes used in the ceremony are, at its close, distributed in all directions, it is expected that they will carry to the under-ground deities, believed to control the springs, the people's prayer for abundant water; while earlier portions of the rites are an appeal to the gods of the air to send frequent showers. We have here a valuable light thrown on the Mexican worship of the snake.

In the Mexican theory, there was a whole

¹ See page 131.

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world of gods who directed everything that affected men, most of all the elements and natural forces, therefore the crops. There was supposed to be an implied agreement, that so long as the people worshiped them and provided for them, they would look after and deal kindly with the people. For these gods were very human: they needed to be fed and were liable to grow old. To keep them in health and vigor, the devout worshipers supplied them frequently with food. Invisible themselves, the gods ate the food invisibly, but not the less really. Again, they needed to be entertained. Therefore the faithful held festivals in their honor and danced before them. In one ceremony intended to refresh and delight the rain-god, who was supposed to be exhausted with producing the showers that had watered their corn and beans, a pool was filled with frogs and harmless water-snakes, and the devout vied with each other in catching and eating them alive, without the aid of their hands, amid shouts of delight.

Among the numerous festivals of the Mexicans, maize being the universal staff of life, the chief one of the year was the one held in honor of the Maize-mother, at the season when the grain

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ripened. The elaborate ceremonies, which lasted several days, were crowned by the sacrifice of a slave-girl, painted to represent corn. Her young heart, offered to the deity, was supposed to recruit the exhausted vitality of the aged goddess. Until this victim had been slain, had any one dared to eat an ear of green corn, the crop would have failed to ripen. In a similar way, at the great May festival — the one which Alvarado seized upon for his slaughter of the Aztecs — a young man chosen for his manly vigor and beauty, after being feasted and crowned with garlands, was escorted by a procession of youths and maidens to the summit of the great pyramid. Then the priest stretched him on the altar-stone, with one deep gash laid open his breast, and offered the smoking heart to Tezcatlipoca, whose youth would be perpetually renewed by such gifts, enabling him to be a mighty protector of his people.

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